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# The Theosophical Quarterly

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### THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The principal aim and object of this Society is to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The subsidiary objects are: The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and the investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

HARVARD COLLEGE
JAN 5 1921

# NOTES AND COMMENTS

## JANUARY, 1921

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### Theosophy, Science and Religion

THEOSOPHY, Divine Wisdom, is the Spirit of Reconciliation, working harmony. It first establishes the divine balance in us, leading the activities of body and mind into harmony with the spiritual nature, and then, through immemorial ages, bringing harmony among men and the races of men, by infusing all with the Holy Spirit of God.

During the last thirty or forty years, there have been few causes of inner disharmony more poignant, and more charged with pain, than what is called the "conflict between religion and science;" which is, in fact, the contest between the external mind, with its account of the universe, and the interior spirit, with its account of the universe. And perhaps there is no field in which Theosophy has been more completely successful than in this, neither sacrificing religion to science nor science to religion, but working harmony between them, giving each its true development in the light of Divine Wisdom.

We have a recent echo of that earlier conflict in a large pamphlet bearing the title: "The Great Question of the Day, Creation versus Evolution, for the first time brought prominently before the world of science and theology alike, and overwhelmingly defended in favor of a Creative Interference; A Study in recent Anthropology." The subtitle, which, in its fulness, suggests the fashion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reads: "A series of three articles on the physical, mental and moral arguments for a direct creation of man by supernatural Agency, embodying the latest scientific discoveries." The author is Dr. Philo Laos Mills, and the pamphlet bears the Imprimatur of Cardinal Gibbons, who writes thus to Dr. Mills:

"In view of the deplorable havoc that is being wrought in our midst by the godless evolutionism and materialism of the day, I cannot but welcome most cordially your valuable contribution on the opposite side. Personally I am convinced that the days of Darwinism are numbered.

Any science that will serve to show that man was created in the image and likeness of the Almighty cannot but merit the highest commendation of every sincere and right-minded thinker. May God bless you in your noble undertaking and secure the widest publicity for your excellent work."

Dr. Mills, in all likelihood without being conscious of it, has, in his main argument and in many of his views, gone a long way towards the positions that were taken up in *The Secret Doctrine,* published thirty-two years ago; he reiterates many of the criticisms of Darwinism there set forth, especially where Darwin's theory deals with man; and he reaches conclusions which, while not going as far as those of *The Secret Doctrine,* nevertheless tend strongly in the same direction.

It will, therefore, be of value and of interest to indicate the conclusions and arguments of Dr. Mills, and, further, to suggest, at several points, the way in which *The Secret Doctrine* rounds out his conclusions.

In the Synopsis of the Argument, Dr. Mills states his major proposition thus:

"It is certain that the earliest types of man are *enormously separated* from any of the simian types and are followed by a *slowly degenerating* or semi-pithecoid type of which the modern 'savage' and the buried remains furnish many examples."

We shall come presently to the minor premiss and the conclusion. First, let us see how Dr. Mills establishes his major premiss.

He rests much of the purely physical side of his case on the broken remnants of the "Piltdown skull," the history of which is as follows: In the autumn of 1911, Mr. Charles Dawson discovered these fragments in the lower stratum of a flint-bearing gravel overlying the Wealden formation (the Hastings Beds) at Piltdown, near Fletching, in Sussex, England. This gravel stratum is a part of the former bed of the river Ouse, which flows into the English Channel a few miles east of Brighton; but, since this gravel was laid down, the Ouse has cut its channel some eighty feet below that level, giving an index of the long spaces of time that have passed since then.

In the neighbourhood of these skull fragments was found a part of a jaw, with which, in combination with the skull fragments, Mr. Dawson and Dr. Charles A. Smith Woodward indulged in a reconstruction that might be almost exactly described by certain lines of a poem of Bret Harte's: the relics of "an animal that was extremely rare." Or one might, with some justice, call it an unconscious emulation of the less ingenuous feat of the late P. T. Barnum, who united the head and body of a monkey to the tail of a fish, in the earlier days of his famous museum.

Barnum acted in obedience to a world-old myth; the myth called for a mermaid, and a mermaid he produced. It is instructive that Mr. Dawson and Dr. Woodward did very much the same thing. Modern mythology called for a "missing link," part monkey, part human, and a "missing link" was accordingly produced, not by joining a monkey and

a fish, but by combining the fragments of a woman's skull (for it seems that this is the skull of a woman), with the jawbone of a chimpanzee. The facts were set forth and commented on in THE THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY for October, 1919 (pp. 175-6).

The two points of interest about the Piltdown skull are, that it is definitely human, not simian, and that it is quite certainly of very high antiquity.

As to the second point, the skull fragments were found close to the tooth of a rather early Pliocene type of elephant, the molar of a mastodon, and the molar of a bear belonging to the first half of the Pleistocene period. The stratum of gravel was composed of Pliocene drift, probably reconstructed in the Pleistocene epoch. In general, there was a characteristic land fauna of Pliocene age.

As to the capacity of the Piltdown skull, it is so fragmentary that it is far from easy to put the pieces together; therefore estimates differ greatly, ranging from 1070 to 1600 cubic centimetres. But it is undoubtedly human, and almost certainly of Pliocene age.

Dr. Mills might have taken an even stronger example in the Galley Hill skull, found in a high gravel bed above the Thames, in Kent. It is also almost certainly of Pliocene age, found in a stratum which, in the same neighbourhood, contains remains of a Pliocene elephant and rhinoceros, and other remains which tell of a warm and therefore pre-glacial or interglacial period. And the type of the Galley Hill skull is undoubtedly high, so high that many scientists too firmly wedded to the dogmatic side of Darwinism have disputed its antiquity for that reason alone; which is, of course, remaking the facts to fit the theories, instead of forming the theories on the facts.

We may sum up the position by quoting from *Prehistoric Man,* by W. L. H. Duckworth (1912):

"On the whole, then, the evolutionary hypothesis seems to receive support from three independent sources of evidence (skull form, associated animal remains, implements).

"But if in one of the very earliest stages, a human form is discovered wherein the characters of the modern higher type are almost if not completely realized, the story of evolution thus set forth receives a tremendous blow. Such has been the effect of the discovery of the Galley Hill skeleton. . . . The argument is reasonable, which urges that if men of the Galley Hill type preceded in point of time the men of the lower Neanderthal type, the ancestor of the former (Galley Hill man) must be sought at a far earlier period than that represented by the Galley Hill gravels. As to this, it may be noted that the extension of the 'human period,' suggested by eoliths (the earliest flint implements) for which Pliocene, Miocene, and even Oligocene antiquity is claimed, will provide more than this argument demands. . . . But if this be so, the significance of the Neanderthal type of skeleton is profoundly altered. It is no longer possible to claim only an 'ancestral' position for that type

in its relation to modern men. It may be regarded as a degenerate form. Should it be regarded as such, a probability exists that it ultimately became extinct, so that we should not expect to identify its descendants through many succeeding stages. That it did become extinct is a view to which the present writer inclines. . . ."

We have, therefore, the fully human type of the Galley Hill and Piltdown gravel beds, associated with a Pliocene elephant and rhinoceros, both belonging to a warm climate; and we have the decidedly inferior and much later Neanderthal type, associated with a later Pleistocene elephant (mammoth) and generally with the reindeer, both belonging to a much colder period. And from this sequence Dr. Mills draws the conclusion that we are faced, not by a steady upward development, but by a high initial level, followed by a downward curve of degeneration, which again curved upward to modern times.

Dr. Mills makes no attempt to fix the date of the early, higher type. It belongs either to the beginning of the Pleistocene period, or, more probably, to the still earlier Pliocene. In 1909, Dr. Sturge estimated a part only of the Pleistocene period at 700,000 years. Dr. Sturge allows 300,000 years since the earliest Neolithic implements; so that we may assume 1,000,000 in round numbers as the time that has elapsed since the beginning of the Pleistocene, the high Galley Hill type thus being a million years old, or more (Dr. Sturge, Prehistoric Society of East Anglia, January, 1909; published in 1911).

We may say, therefore, that the facts fairly sustain Dr. Mills' argument from the human fossils: that a type of man as high as that of today existed much earlier than the degenerate Neanderthal type. The approximate age we have assigned to this high early type, a million years, agrees fairly closely with the estimate given in *The Secret Doctrine* for the duration of Pleistocene time (II, 710, 1888).

Dr. Mills bases a second argument on the comparatively high spirituality and morality of certain "primitive" tribes, chiefly belonging to the Negrito races of the Malay region; tribes which he believes closely to resemble the men of the Galley Hill type, and to be, in a sense, unchanged descendants of that type. He wisely includes in the equipment of these primitive races many powers popularly called magical, which students of Theosophy would be inclined to class as psychical.

Here again we find ourselves in general agreement with Dr. Mills. And we are particularly attracted by his conclusion:

"Thus we see that there is a material or technical progress from age to age. . . . Moreover, the spiritual and the ideal come first, the practical and the useful follow later; and from this point of view *there is a higher science in primitive times than in any other period of Humanity.* The primitive super-man has no use for a flying machine when 'his soul can soar above the clouds'; nor for a wireless outfit when 'he can see the distant vision in the shining water.' . . . Can this be explained in any other way than by a *primordial communication of super-*

*natural truth to the original ancestors of mankind?* How can we otherwise account for its increasing brilliancy the further we mount up into the past? And if a revelation be once admitted, a supreme Creator and Elevator of man becomes a necessity. There is no illumination without an Illuminator!" (The italics are Dr. Mills'.)

With the general thought expressed in these sentences many students of Theosophy will find themselves in hearty agreement. This primitive revelation they think of as the work of the Dhyan Chohan, the Planetary Spirit, representative of the Logos, incarnated among the first races, and impressing on their plastic minds the broad outlines of spiritual teaching, which have reverberated down the ages and are, in fact, preserved, though only as a distant echo, by the primitive tribes whom Dr. Mills so well and justly describes.

But many students of Theosophy would go much further. They hold that this primitive revelation, once bestowed upon mankind, was preserved in its completeness by certain classes of supremely spiritual men; that it is so preserved today; that *The Secret Doctrine* presents many of the teachings of this primitive revelation, and that the whole of this revelation is within reach of those who will pass through the preparatory stages of purification and sacrifice.

More than that, many students of Theosophy hold that this primitive revelation was not a single, isolated event; but, rather, that we are in the presence of a progressive spiritual development. That the same Spirit of the Logos, having become incarnate in the beginning, appears again and again in incarnation, bringing life and immortality to light; and that the fundamental unity of all true religions springs from this unity of source.

Students of Theosophy will also agree with the view of Dr. Mills, that the whole process of evolution, from the beginning, has been marked by the interposition and guidance of intelligent spiritual powers; and the Catholic doctrine of the hierarchy of Angels, Principalities and Powers depicts just the kind of agency that students of Theosophy accept.

Students of Theosophy might be inclined to criticise the wording, rather than the general idea, of Dr. Mills' minor proposition and conclusion, which he states as follows:

"This enormous *separation* and subsequent *degeneration* give the lie to progressive evolutionism, but postulate the *sudden elevation* of the (human) species at the very commencement by a Power which is above and beyond all the forces of nature.

"Therefore: The earliest types of man can only be accounted for by the direct intervention of a *transcendent Power.*" (The italics are Dr. Mills'.)

This appears to us to mean that the Galley Hill and Piltdown races, or, perhaps, earlier ancestors of theirs, of the same general character, were not developed from some antecedent form (whether lower or

higher) but were "created," turned out ready-made, with the whole complicated apparatus of the vertebrate skeleton and physical organs complete. It is not altogether clear whether Dr. Mills accepts some form of evolution for animals, and particularly the other vertebrate types, all of which so closely correspond to the vertebrate frame of the human body. But Dr. Mills seems inclined to hold some such view, since he always sets the human and the non-human over against each other.

Here, perhaps, is the point at which *The Secret Doctrine* may offer the clues for which Dr. Mills is seeking.

We have already made it clear that *The Secret Doctrine,* which was published in 1888-89, has anticipated most of the conclusions reached by Dr. Mills thirty years later; and, in general, with the same purpose in view: to demonstrate the divine origin and spiritual life of mankind. But *The Secret Doctrine* further presents a solution of many difficulties into which, it seems to us, a thinker may be led, who presses too rigidly the conclusions expressed by Dr. Mills.

First: Is it necessary, or advisable, to postulate the appearance of the Galley Hill man ready-made, with all the infinite complexity of his vertebrate form and organs?

Second: Is it advisable to postulate this sudden appearance, and, at the same time, to think of the general vertebrate type, which corresponds bone for bone with the human skeleton, as having been slowly developed by evolution?

Third: Is it advisable to cut a chasm between the works of God and the works of Nature, with, let us say, the skeleton of man on the one side, and the almost precisely similar skeletal plan of the vertebrate animals on the other, saying that God made the one, and that Nature made the other; Nature, apparently, having perfected the vertebrate plan first?

Then there is the far deeper and more difficult question of consciousness. Dr. Mills appears to imply that the human consciousness is the direct creative work of God; while the consciousness, let us say, of birds, is the work of Nature. But the consciousness of birds contains many of the elements of understanding and feeling on which Dr. Mills relies to prove the spirituality of primitive man; for example, a high sex morality (in many species); devotion, to the point of complete self-sacrifice, to offspring; wonderfully artistic construction, for instance in the orioles; and, in so many of the thrush family, a gift for music which, outside humanity, has no parallel whatever in nature. Further, the birds appear to possess certain faculties, a certain gift with regard to space and time, which human beings in general cannot emulate, or even comprehend.

Is it, therefore, advisable to hold that Nature has, in the birds, produced this miracle of consciousness unaided, while nothing less than divine interposition will account for the similar consciousness in man?

Is it not wiser, more consistent and philosophical, to hold, as do many students of Theosophy, that God and Nature are not divided by a chasm; that Nature is God made manifest, the primal Divine Incarnation, and, therefore, the immeasurable initial Sacrifice? That God is in the truest sense immanent in Nature, in every atom or electron, which, therefore, thrills with spiritual life and potential consciousness; but that God is also Transcendent, eternal in the Heavens; that the Logos, the Mind of God, is no mere sum of the life of the electrons, but is a unitary Divine Consciousness, infinitely possessing Wisdom and Truth and Love, and working through Angels, Principalities and Powers at every point, in every atom of Nature, ceaselessly working for the redemption of all things, till all be perfected in the One?

Many students of Theosophy, therefore, believe in the spiritual character of every form of life, though, through misuse of free-will, that spirituality may be perverted and turned to evil; but at the same time believe in an orderly progression or development, in which not only the Galley Hill man but the orioles also have their spiritual part.

Dr. Mills affirms his belief in a primeval revelation. Many students of Theosophy, as has already been said, believe the same thing. And they are disposed to see, in the early chapters of Genesis, as in many other ancient Scriptures, clear echoes of that primeval revelation or newer unveilings from the same source.

The author of *The Secret Doctrine* has put forward the view that we have, in the first chapters of Genesis, a highly philosophical and scientific outline of the great process of development, as it in fact took place. The first chapter and the first three verses of the second chapter, the Elohistic portion, contains the broad outline of the whole process of evolution, perfected in seven great periods or Rounds, and having, as its goal, the development of spiritual man made perfect, an immortal archangel. The next portion, beginning with the fourth verse of the second chapter, the story of Adam and Eve, is, on the contrary, the description of the present period or Round, the fourth of the seven. And in this fourth period, Man is the first form to be developed on the earth, to be followed later by other animal forms.

But students of Theosophy do not picture to themselves the sudden appearance of, let us say, the Galley Hill man, with a ready-made complete vertebrate skeleton and a complex wealth of organs. That would seem somewhat abrupt and violent. Students of Theosophy think, rather, of a spiritual, almost an ideal form, becoming gradually more condensed and defined; a form that, at a certain stage, might almost be called semi-material and gelatinous; in which the pattern of the vertebrate skeleton (which had been worked out in an earlier world-period or Round) was gradually impressed and solidified.

It happens that this process can be well illustrated by certain facts observed in embryonic life. A quotation from C. W. Beebe's book, *The Bird,* will serve the purpose well:

"About the fourth day of incubation, sections of our embryo chick will show a low, rounded ridge, extending the whole length from the neck to the tail. While we can never be absolutely certain that perfect homology exists between the two (the chick and a generalized aquatic ancestor), yet it is very significant that soon after its development it dwindles away, leaving four conical, isolated buds—the beginnings of the limbs of the bird. Within two or three days after the appearance of the limbs, faint streaks become visible upon the tips of the extremities, and these hints of the bones of fingers and toes, for such they are, soon push out beyond the edge, still bound together by their transparent membrane, and for some time they present the appearance of webbed paws or radiate fins. But as early as the tenth day, except for the absence of feathers and claws, the limbs are, in appearance, very perfect wings and feet. The most interesting fact in connection with the limbs is that their development begins superficially and works inward, not, as would be thought, starting at the shoulder and ending at the digits. Even the deep-seated shoulder and thigh girdles of bone are not derived from the axial skeleton. The former, in the long ago, were pushed in from the surface. . . Up to about the twelfth day the tiny foreshadowings of bones are cartilaginous, like those of the shark, but at this time real osseous, or bony, tissue begins to be deposited in spots which spread rapidly. In the various portions of the skull these bony centres spread until the bones are separated only by narrow sutures, and in the adult bird even these are obliterated. . . " (Pages 473-75.)

This gives some idea of what we mean by the pattern of the vertebrate skeleton being gradually impressed on a being who was, first, ideal, then ethereal, then gradually solidifying through a stage which we have ventured to call gelatinous; and some such view as this is held by many students of Theosophy. Here is the great curve of degeneration, the Descent into Matter, a part of which Dr. Mills has clearly seen and has illustrated by his diagrams. For this gradual solidification and definition, we must allow several million years, at the end of which will appear such a type as the Galley Hill man, to whom we have tentatively assigned an antiquity of a million years or more.

But the development of the chick serves also to illustrate something else: First, the impressing of the generalized vertebrate pattern on soft, gelatinous material; then the specialization of this general form into that of a biped with feathers, and, in particular, the specific form of the barndoor fowl.

Many students of Theosophy think of the development of vertebrate life as following some such course as this: first the impressing of the general plan, the idea, so to speak, on a semi-ethereal body which gradually passed through a gelatinous stage to one of full solidity; then the specialization of the one general pattern into the numberless forms of vertebrate life. Man retains the general form; animals, birds and other vertebrates are the specializations. In this sense, man stands at the

beginning of this period of life; and it is easy to understand why his form is practically unchanged in a million years, while *Elephas meridionalis* has been succeeded by *Elephas antiquus,* this in turn making way for *Elephas primigenius,* the mammoth, now extinct, and replaced by living elephants; so that, of the characteristic animals which surrounded this early man, not one now survives, while his form remains unchanged.

And many students of Theosophy, who trace the history of man thus downward from an angelic being, are persuaded that we have reached the midpoint of the curve; they think of a long progression in the future, through such stages as Saint Paul has called the psychical body and the spiritual body, returning once more to the angel, but an angel redeemed, enriched by age-long experience, purified by suffering and sacrifice.

Dr. Mills has, with endless patience and intuitive insight, reached some of the conclusions which were given to the world more than thirty years ago, in *The Secret Doctrine.* He has patiently and painfully put together a number of the pieces of the great Chinese puzzle; is it too much to expect that he may now turn to the pattern, and see how the whole picture is completed? Should he do this, we can promise him that the solution of many enigmas will be there to his hand; the conflict between science and religion will cease to exist, reconciled and harmonized in a science which is deeply religious, in a view of religion which is at the same time profoundly scientific.

* * * * * * * * *

That long conflict drew its force from the materialism of science, on the one hand, and from the dogmatism, the intolerant spirit, of religion, on the other. From the standpoint of Theosophy, it may be said in parenthesis, science which is materialistic is no true science, and religion which is intolerant is no true religion.

It is, therefore, with sincere happiness that students of Theosophy, the Spirit of Reconciliation, are able to recognize so much true and wise tolerance in the conclusions of the recent Lambeth Conference. As a main result of this Conference, the "Archbishops and Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church in full communion with the Church of England, two hundred and fifty-two in number," have put forth an Encyclical Letter, which breathes the spirit of brotherly love. Perhaps the most distinctive passage is this:

"The secret of life is fellowship. So men feel, and it is true. But fellowship with God is the indispensable condition of human fellowship. The secret of life is the double fellowship, fellowship with God and with man. . . "

Since the principal object of The Theosophical Society is "to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour," it is with the utmost interest

that students of Theosophy look for the applications, in the recent Encyclical, of this doctrine of fellowship.

There is, first, the difference of creed. What has the Encyclical to say concerning the principles here? Perhaps this passage will answer the question:

"In the past, negotiations for reunion [of Christian Churches] have often started with the attempt to define the measure of uniformity which is essential. The impression has been given that nothing else matters. Now we see that those elements of truth about which differences have arisen are essential to the fulness of the witness of the whole Church. We have no need to belittle what is distinctive in our own interpretation of Christian life; we believe that it is something precious which we hold in trust for the common good. We desire that others should share in our heritage and our blessings, as we wish to share in theirs. It is not by reducing the different groups of Christians to uniformity, but by rightly using their diversity that the Church can become all things to all men. So long as there is vital connection with the Head, there is positive value in the differentiation of the members."

The key sentence here: "not by reducing the different groups to uniformity, but by rightly using their diversity," is an admirable presentation of a principle which has been set forth times without number by students of Theosophy.

So much for difference of creed. Concerning difference of sex, the Encyclical Letter has equally wise words of counsel: "It is the peculiar gifts and the special excellence of women which the Church will most wish to use. Its wisdom will be shown, not in disregarding, but in taking advantage of, the differences between women and men." Here again is what we have long been accustomed to call the distinctively Theosophical principle: not unison, but harmony.

As to difference of race, there is this passage in the Encyclical:

"We cannot believe that the effect of the coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth will be to abolish nations. Holy Scripture emphasizes the value of national life and indicates its permanence. The sense of nationality seems to be a natural instinct. The love which Christ pours into the hearts that are His, makes men cease to hate each other because they belong to different nations. Within redeemed humanity nations will not cease to exist, but nationality itself will be redeemed."

Students of Theosophy would, perhaps, be inclined to say that nationality is not so much "a natural instinct" as the expression of the differing rays of the Logos; therefore as inherent as the difference between the notes of the gamut and between the colours; and, like these, rendering possible a harmony of tones or colours that would otherwise have no existence. But, in general, this presentation of nationality is in harmony with the first principle of The Theosophical Society.

One point we should like to underline. The Letter says: "The love which Christ pours into the hearts that are His, makes men cease to

hate each other because they belong to different nations." Students of Theosophy might be inclined to press the principle further, and to say that there is true nationality only when the hearts of a nation are receptive to that Divine Light; that there are counterfeit nationalisms inspired not by Divine Light but by egotism and vanity; and that, being no true nations, they have no true title to national life, nor any true claim to associate themselves with the real nations. This may have a bearing on two things: the movement called Sinn Fein, and the admission of Germany into the League of Nations, for which the Encyclical pleads, but which by no means commends itself to students of Theosophy, so long as Germany remains unrepentant; and students of Theosophy will believe Germany repentant only after she has made the utmost possible reparation, instead of shirking and lying and breaking her pledged word. We doubt whether, in any branch of any Church, there is provision for the absolution of unrepented sin; and we are convinced that condoning of unrepented sin makes one participant in that sin.

So far as the difference of caste, or class, is concerned, we cannot express such complete sympathy with the expressions of the Letter. The distinctive sentences are these:

"The Church will, for instance, maintain that fellowship is endangered if all who serve do not share equitably in the results of labour. For this is part of Christian justice. The Church will fearlessly claim that the human character of every worker is more sacred than his work; that his worth as a child of God and a member of the fellowship must not be forgotten, or imperilled by any form of industrial slavery. . . ."

We have no criticism of what is here said, except it be that the most painful toil, and even slavery itself, may bear excellent fruit in Christian character. A man need not stop work in order to cultivate his soul; on the contrary, his soul is in far more danger, just because he has stopped work. We suggest an ancient verse concerning mischief and idle hands; nothing at all is said about busy hands, even the busy hands of a slave.

But we do criticise seriously, not what is said, but what is omitted. Surely, one of the gravest moral dangers of humanity, and in a special way, of England is, not any oppression of capital, but the heavy, blind, brutal tyranny of "Labour." We conceive that the Church of Christ is more menaced there than it has ever been by any conditions of hardship whatever. And, to speak quite frankly, we feel that there is a certain cowardice, a certain temporizing, politic timidity, or, what is, perhaps, more dangerous, a thorough-going blindness to the realities of the case, in this silence.

It is of particular interest to students of Theosophy to find that Theosophy and The Theosophical Society have had careful consideration by the Lambeth Conference; or, to speak more accurately, that such has been the intention.

It is a fair guess that the Archbishops and Bishops, two hundred and fifty-two in number, will be somewhat taken aback to be told that, on the one hand, the spirit of The Theosophical Society is admirably, though not completely, expressed throughout the Encyclical Letter; and, on the other, that nowhere, perhaps, will certain strictures which they have passed on Theosophy, as they conceive it, be so heartily welcomed and warmly appreciated as by many readers of THE THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY.

What the Conference has to say, is this:

"The Conference, while recognizing that the three publicly stated objects of The Theosophical Society do not in themselves appear to be inconsistent with loyal membership of the Church, expresses its conviction that there are cardinal elements in the positive teaching current in theosophical circles and literature which are irreconcilable with the Christian faith, and warns Christian people who may be induced to make a study of Theosophy by the seemingly Christian elements contained in it to be on their guard against the ultimate bearing of theosophical teaching, and to examine strictly the character and credentials of the teachers upon whose authority they are encouraged or compelled to rely."

Many readers of THE THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY, as has been said, will welcome this pronouncement most sincerely. It is simply a repetition of what has been said, over and over again, in these pages. For the only body known to the Conference appears to be the Adyar Society; and its leaders, in the view of many who read THE THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY, parted company with the genuine principles and practice of Theosophy twenty-five years ago.

We record with profound sympathy the paragraph which follows:

"The Conference, believing that the attraction of Theosophy for some Christian people lies largely in its presentation of Christian faith as a quest for knowledge, recommends that in the current teaching of the Church due regard should be given to the mystical elements of faith and life which underlie the historic belief of Christendom."

That is a good and fruitful quest. It is exactly what many students of Theosophy have been doing for many years.

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*How should you be a lamp when you yield no light to what is close besides you?*—AKHLAQ-I JALALI.

# FRAGMENTS

THERE is but one way,—the way of self-forgetfulness, and devotion to the interests of others. Without this, as a perpetually animating spirit, joys may easily become snares.

From any joy be always detached; in any joy be always recollected.

Let all joy be in and through me. In my keeping it is safe; in your own it will be lost.

To walk safely, be secure in the purity and honesty of your intention, and seek perpetually how you may help and serve and minister to the interests and pleasures of others, with no single thought of your own. If you live from minute to minute with such intention, you can make no mistake, there will be no danger, and the work entrusted to you will prosper, since I will keep and guide it. If in the smallest detail it slips from my hand, there lies the danger,—as one stitch dropped can unravel the whole.

You must bear with cheerful patience whatever else may be put upon you. Sin must be purged, and that means sorrow. Pain and sacrifice make atonement for past wrong. Accept as from my hand each deprivation; there shall not be one feather's weight more than must be, and every blessing you make possible, or have made, I shall give.

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Failure is an illusion, like all other illusions, one of the snares of Mara. Its consciousness pertains only to the four worlds, and it fades to nothingness at the entrance to the higher three. No breath of its cold blight touches the Immortal Dweller in those regions. Keep steadfast in that faith. Set it as a torch upon the pathway of your life.

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It has been said that Buddha climbed into heaven upon the shoulders of a million men. This is one expression of Brotherhood, and of the obligations entailed by it, too seldom or inadequately understood. That

I stand where I stand to-day, I owe but in small part to myself. Myriads of beings on all planes have contributed to make me what I am, physically, mentally, morally. Many are quite unconscious of the fact,—as unconscious as I. Others have deliberately and of free choice given of their best—or sacrificed—for me, stepping from sunshine into shadow to make room for my more pressing need.

Bound together, part and parcel each of the other's success or failure, we grow and evolve as others help us to make possible; as we, in turn, make possible their evolution. That I have not yet opened that door ahead of me, upon whose handle, perchance, my uncertain fingers have lain these many years, hesitating, timid,—how many, guess you, have been obliged to wait, a tedious or painful wait, before entering a further room of better light and truer freedom and wider outlook? That fault I have struggled with in part, but which is still unconquered,—the fate of how many, may be, is hanging in the balance of my victory or defeat?

And this is true of souls in all stages of evolution; we confine our responsibilities and gratitude far too much to human kind. Brotherhood knows no such distinctions, but runs freely through all kingdoms, from tiniest atom to highest, intangible being. The whole universe is different that I live. So the great question confronts us,—*how* is it different? That is what we must ask ourselves, seeking if we may discover the means whereby to prove an endless blessing throughout the seven worlds, a benefactor in the highest, purest sense.

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The secret of this tangled, bewildering, painful life is the inner life—the religious life; and the secret of the religious life is love. Great saints carry us still further into the depths of these mysteries, telling us what sometimes seems difficult of comprehension, that the heart of it all is joy, and bliss unspeakable. O marvel of marvels! toward which we grope in our blindness, reaching out longing hands, straining our weary steps. For this unfailing testimony through all the ages awakens a hope as immortal as its source.

CAVÉ.

# WILLIAM BLAKE

*"Those who break Nature's laws lose their physical health; those who break the laws of the inner life lose their psychic health."*

*—Light on the Path.*

*"We are the richer, but they [poets & artists] are the poorer. They should have sealed their lips, guarding the vision in their hearts till they had wrought it into the fabric of their lives."*

*—The Song of Life.*

WILLIAM BLAKE'S name has some of the fascination of the "untravelled world whose margin fades for ever and for ever" from the sight. One finds apt quotations from his writings in almost every essay or book that treats of mysticism. Anthologies reprint lovely and suggestive poems over his name. Authors who stand at extremes of the temperamental range, from exuberant and exaggerating Swinburne to judicial Miss Underhill, praise him in various manners and degrees. The cumulative effect of such mention of an author who is otherwise unknown, is that we receive an impression of rich, unexplored country. But if one sets out to explore, the margin fades. First, the books are not easily accessible; they did not find publishers during Blake's lifetime. The most important of them (according to Blake's opinion) were for the first time published in ordinary type, so recently as 1904—a whole century after they were written. While there are earlier editions than that of 1904, those earlier printings are facsimiles of script—attractive (and expensive) for collectors, but for practical use, illegible. A curious explorer who persists beyond the first obstacle of inaccessible books, faces, next, the difficulty of writings that are not to be read by him who runs. The explorer does not skim neat sentences—it seems as if the apt quotations and the charming verse of the anthologies contained all the gold—he encounters forbidding heaps like the desolate accumulation of rubbish outside a slate quarry. The average explorer turns back from Blake's untravelled world, and contents himself with information at second hand.

But bolder navigators are advancing. A hundred years ago, when Blake's voluminous manuscripts came into the hands of his executor, that executor burned them, convinced that they contained harmful teachings. Now, conditions have so changed that a vogue of Blake may be possible. Two facts might make him popular. First, he writes in "free-verse."[1] Second, he paints and writes about spiritualistic or psychical subjects; he drew portraits of the spirits who visited him in his rooms—his writings were

[1] The well known anthology poems in conventional metre are lapses from his customary form.

taken down in dictation from spirits. A year or so ago, a Blake exhibition was held in New York. Art Museums, in Boston and elsewhere, are collecting his works. Two editors, Ellis and Yeats, the latter, at one time, an avid student of theosophical writings, have expounded, by aid of the *Secret Doctrine,* Blake's elaborate symbology. Certain literary coteries—Swinburne and the Pre-Raphaelites, made a fad of Blake. From a fad, he may become a temporary idol; he may be regarded as another prophet unhonoured in his own generation, a neglected forerunner of Conan Doyle and Oliver Lodge.

Blake was born in 1757 and died in 1827. He was able to work until his death. His period of productivity thus covers two different cycles, and two generations of men. He worked in the last quarter of the 18th century—the cycle of Cagliostro and St. Martin. He sympathized with the political ambitions of the French Revolution. In the opening cycle of the 19th century, he outlived Byron, Shelley and Keats.

His thought, in its general course, is a curious blend of tendencies from each cycle and generation. Though he abetted the 18th century revolutionary movement, on its political side, to the point of intimate friendship with Priestley and Paine, there is no superlative that would exaggerate his detestation of its anti-Christian nature. He traced backwards the religion of the Revolution—Deism and "Natural Religion"—through Locke, Newton and Bacon. Those three names recur as a refrain through his philosophical writing—a refrain of anathema; sometimes he adds to them, singly or combined, Gibbon, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau. He held up against their anti-Christian dogmas not only the Christ of history but the Living Christ. He believed it possible to meet the Living Christ face to face in the world. He made a transition, by that positive belief, from the negative scepticism of the 18th century to the constructive philosophy of the 19th century poets. Like these latter, he saw the imaginative faculty as a saving spiritual element in man; and in his elaborate symbolical system, he recognizes correspondence between that faculty of man and Christ. With these positive convictions, he nevertheless held certain private interpretations that greatly restrict his understanding of Christian history—such as on the Passion and Death of Christ—that they represent a certain weakness of Christ's human nature, rather than triumphant victory. While he partakes of the constructive work of the new generation, his true position is transitional.

The new poetry of Blake's time ("Tintern Abbey" and "Adonaïs" fairly represent it) seems *tabula rasa,* so far as no explicit or implicit mention is made of doctrines hitherto taught as specifically Christian. But such clearing of the surface worked advantageously in the end, and forced a re-statement of convictions that were deeply felt. The result in the poetry itself was a new (Blake had very little share in this achievement) and fresh understanding of the universe—as the One Life in many lives—the old understanding of the Upanishads. That

new interpretation of life, and new understanding of nature, was perhaps one of the gifts to the new century from the Lodge Messenger of 1775. And the result for the poets themselves, as in the case of Keats, was such a deepening appreciation of the One Life in many lives, as to lead almost to the discovery of the possibility of discipleship.

Blake's father was a very poor man, and Blake was one of several children. He was trained to earn his living as an engraver on copper. And, as he showed facility with the pencil, he was given lessons in art, also. In addition to copying upon copper for his livelihood the pictures of others, he began to make sketches and designs of his own, and also to write verse. Occupation with art brought about friendship with John Flaxman, a sculptor of the Canova, pseudo-classicist type. Flaxman's name is seldom heard now, but in the period of 1800 he was much honoured as a successful illustrator of Pope's Homer. Interest in art was not the sole bond holding Flaxman and Blake. Both were admirers of Swedenborg, whose writings appeared in English translation soon after their author's death in 1772. Flaxman was a thorough-going adherent, while Blake accepted Swedenborg with reservations. Though Flaxman was only two years older than Blake, he had the prestige of growing success, and generously tried in many ways, for many years, to advance Blake's interests. First, he introduced Blake to some literary people, at whose soirées, Blake sang his verses to tunes of his own improvisation. As a novelty, Blake lasted long enough with this "set," for their leader, jointly with Flaxman, to bear the expense of putting through the press some of his youthful poems. These poems attracted no notice whatever. By 1789, Blake had written more verse—those known as *Songs of Innocence,* and containing the best of all his poems, the sweet, naïve, and devout "Little lamb, who made thee?" Blake was perplexed about how to get these published. With the utter failure of the first volume, he had ended as a "nine days' wonder" with the literary coterie. He had no money, and no friend among publishers. In this perplexity, one night while asleep, his brother, Robert Blake, who had recently died (and who, William said, continued to visit and converse with him every day) came to him, and suggested a way out of the difficulty. The way suggested was a perfectly natural one, although slow and laborious. Robert Blake pointed out that his brother need have no dealings with printers and publishers. He could take small pieces of copper plate, and engrave his verses, just as visiting cards and invitations are engraved. Blake did so, surrounding the verses with ornamental borders and designs. After he had printed from the engraved plates, St. Joseph came, according to Blake, and showed him how to fill in the designs and background with water-colour paints.

By this slow and tedious method, Blake published a few years later, 1794, a second small collection of verse, *Songs of Experience,* containing the often quoted Tiger poem—"Tiger, Tiger, burning bright"; and by that same laborious process, he put forth his writings until his death.

There was one exception. A publisher did undertake one poem on *The French Revolution,* as anything upon that subject seemed promising at a time when England was full of applause for the new movement in France. But Blake never carried it beyond the first section.

The *Songs of Experience* are Blake's last literary work. From 1790 onwards, he was engaged upon his so-called Books of Prophecy or Books of Vision, political, philosophical, religious, and cosmological treatises, set forth through complex symbology. Some of the titles are: *Tiriel, Thel, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Daughters of Albion, Urizen, Ahania, Los, Vala.* These culminate in what he considered his most important writings, *Jerusalem* and *Milton.* The "Prophetic Books" are brief—from three to twenty octavo pages of ordinary print. The *Milton* and the *Jerusalem* are very much longer. The composition, engraving, and colouring of these writings was done in whatever leisure he had (often abundant) from his occupation of engraving for the trade. How slowly the process of engraving his manuscripts proceeded, is revealed by the dates of the *Jerusalem.* The date *engraved* on the title page is 1804. But the date *water-marked* in the paper on which Blake printed from the plates, is 1820. That means it took him sixteen years to make the plates for this single writing.

As Blake was in the business, the purchase of copper plate required comparatively slight capital. Once the plates were made, they eked out his income, which was always meagre. From time to time one of his few friends would order a coloured copy of some book—either moved by genuine interest or by charity; if the latter, generously concealing a gift under the name of an order. Blake furnished a list of prices to enquirers for copies. The prices range from £3 to £10. The copies are reported as of varying value, dependent upon the mood,—the care and enthusiasm—in which Blake made them. The copies were not numerous, and are now *objets de luxe.* Facsimile reproductions, in colour, have been made of some. The New York Public Library owns some of Blake's own hand-coloured copies, and some facsimiles.

At the same time that Blake was engraving for the trade, and doing his writing and private engraving, he was also drawing and painting pictures of all kinds. Most of these went to friends who would generously commission him to prepare ten or more pictures; these pictures were paid for in advance, and Blake was given his own time for their completion. The circumstances of his life were so hard that he often had to solicit a second advance from his patrons while still in arrears with his payment.

There was a definite purpose in all this labour and this life of poverty. It was to further "the interest of true religion and science." [2] In carrying out his purpose, his plan of action was not unlike Madame

[2] In a letter of 1802, Blake writes: "The thing I have most at heart—more than life, or all that seems to make life comfortable without—is the interest of true religion and science. And whenever anything appears to affect that interest (especially if I myself omit any duty to my station as a soldier of Christ), it gives me the greatest of torments."

Blavatsky's. He struck hard blows at the false religion and false science then current, and after that attack upon the Church, and upon the enemies of the Church, he built up his own system of religion and science unified. Naturally, he shocked the orthodox, when he stoutly declared that "being good" would get no man into Heaven. He had grasped a commonplace of the East, the idea of "pairs of opposites"—"being good" and "being bad" are only one such pair. That idea was entirely foreign to the West, and when Blake vehemently denounced the false asceticism which masks as piety, he was in turn denounced as an extreme radical. He was not a radical at all. He was declaring the truth—that Heaven is not won by negativeness, but is taken by violence. "The treasures of heaven are not negations of passion but realities of intellect . . . The fool shall not enter into heaven, be he ever so holy." Blake's attack upon orthodox ecclesiasticism can be found in most of his productions,—flippantly, in the doggerel verses of *Songs of Experience:*

> Dear mother, dear mother, the Church is cold
> But the ale-house is healthy and pleasant and warm.

His object was too serious, however, for him to endanger it by frequent use of such a method. His more usual attitude is shown in a conversation quoted by Mr. H. Crabb Robinson, the lawyer friend of the artists and literary people of the day: "I have much intercourse," Blake said, "with Voltaire, and he said to me: 'I blasphemed the Son of Man, and it shall be forgiven me, but they [Voltaire's enemies] blasphemed the Holy Ghost in me, and it shall not be forgiven them'."[3] Blake's concentrated attack is to be found in verse called "The Everlasting Gospel." Irony and sarcasm abound. His sallies admit explanation which take much of the sting out of them. But no explanations are published with his words, and their sharp crudity is meant to outrage. The poem is introduced thus:

> The vision of Christ that thou dost see
> Is my vision's greatest enemy;
> Thine is the Friend of all mankind,
> Mine speaks in parables to the blind.

Then in half a dozen sections Blake scores some of the virtues prized by Pharisees and orthodox, and shows that Christ's life went counter to every one of these distorted virtues. First, Blake ridicules gentleness.

> Was Jesus gentle, or did He
> Give any marks of gentility?
> When twelve years old He ran away
> And left His parents in dismay.
> "No earthly parents I confess—
> My Heavenly Father's business."

[3] Robinson continues the conversation thus: "I asked in what language Voltaire spoke. His answer was ingenious, and gave no encouragement to cross-questioning: 'To my sensations it was English. It was like the touch of a musical key; he touched it probably French, but to my ear it became English.' "

Next, Blake pours contempt upon perverted notions of humility.

> Was Jesus humble? or did He
> Give any proofs of humility?
> If He had been anti-Christ, creeping Jesus,
> He'd have done anything to please us;
> Gone sneaking into synagogues,
> And not used the elders and priests like dogs;
> But, humble as a lamb or ass,
> Obeyed Himself to Caiaphas.
> God wants not man to humble himself.

He concludes "The Everlasting Gospel" with this couplet,

> I am sure this Jesus will not do
> Either for Englishman or Jew.

Duly considered, Blake's attacks do no more harm than to shock the "being good" type of religion. If he had stopped merely with attack, it would be harmful. But he built up a construction to replace the valueless things he tried to overturn.

Yet Blake did not ally himself with the philosophers and economists who were the outspoken enemies of orthodoxy. He censured them even more sharply than he had done the ecclesiastics, and shows what a narrow range their blind materialism has. "He never can be a friend to the human race who is the preacher of natural morality or natural religion. You, O Deists! are the enemies of the human race and of universal nature." He calls the scientist gods of the eighteenth century—Newton, Bacon, Locke—devils in disguise, and the instruments of devils. Their materialism is a pall of blight, smothering humanity.

> Bacon and Newton, sheathed in dismal steel, their terrors hang
> Like iron scourges over Albion.
> I turn my eyes to the schools and universities of Europe,
> And there behold the loom of Locke, whose woof rages dire,
> Washed by the water-wheels of Newton: black the cloth,
> In heavy wreaths, folds over every nation.

Combatting the dogmas of the material scientists and philosophers, Blake maintained, with the authority of personal experience, that life is not a small thing of the physical perceptions, but that there are finer and finer forms of substance interpenetrating the gross matter of the physical plane. These finer grades of matter are the more solid as they are more remote in essence from physical matter. He declared also that those planes of finer substance are not cloudlands but countries in "stronger and better light" than earth; their inhabitants have stronger and better "lineaments than the eye can see." Blake drew portraits of men from those worlds who frequently sat in his study. He pushed his attack against the pseudo-scientists to the last point by reiterating emphatically

that those higher worlds, which are perceived by inner senses, and their inhabitants, are not vapours, but organisms minutely constructed; the spiritual beings who conversed with him were not ghosts, but "organized men."

In his constructive work, Blake takes religion and science out of their antagonistic position, and brings them together in mutual support. To religion he wished to give a scientific, metaphysical basis; to science a spiritual goal, in seeking out the nature and laws of inner worlds. His constructive work is done by means of a vast allegory, parts of which extend through practically all the "Prophetic Books." The purpose of the allegory is clearest in the two long books, *Jerusalem* and *Milton*.

Meditating upon the spurious religion and the spurious science of the world, and man's helplessness with those "blind mouths," Blake, claiming to be taught from Heaven,[4] undertakes to point man the way out of the dark forest, as Dante and other poets and seers have done. He makes a giant, Albion, by name, represent man or humanity. The giant's stature suggests the vast potentialities locked up in human nature. But, notwithstanding his divine potentialities (Albion is the Divine Image), this giant of immense strength has become the prisoner and slave of a pale Spectre. To Blake, the word Spectre, was sufficiently descriptive and connotative. He did not feel the need of any other name to symbolize the rationalising powers of the mind which are "the slayer of the real." To the physical body in which Albion is clothed, Blake gives a fitting symbol, "the Shadow." Albion's duty is "to slay the slayer," and to awake to his real consciousness,—out of the dream of elemental consciousness into his true humanity which is an image of the divine.

> Each man is in his Spectre's power
> Until the arrival of that hour,
> When his humanity awake
> And cast his Spectre into the lake.

Albion was enslaved by the Spectre when the Spectre captured and demolished his chief citadel, Jerusalem. The name, Jerusalem, symbolizes the spiritual imagination,—the faculty in man which images divine truths and realities. It emanates from the Divine Image, Albion; and Blake calls it, in opposition to the Spectre, the Emanation. It is the city of the great King, "the temple not made with hands," the place where Albion meets his Creator,—where man attains to union. To free himself, Albion must upbuild again that fortress. The struggle before him is age-long, and must be repeated again and again, on many planes. An Arjuna brood of "fathers and grandfathers, instructors, uncles, brothers,

[4] "I am under the direction of messengers from heaven, daily and nightly."—from a letter to his friend, Butts.

"I have written this poem (*Milton* and *Jerusalem*) from immediate dictation, twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation, and even against my will."—Letter to Butts.

sons" is ranged in this fratricidal strife. When man shall gain the final victory, he will have won a share in his triumph not only for all of humanity, but for all the lives below the human level.

> All human forms identified, even tree, metal, earth and stone; all
> Human forms identified, living, going forth and returning wearied
> Into the planetary lives of years, months, days, and hours; reposing
> And then awaking into His bosom in the life of immortality.

As in all symbolic writings, the allegory is not a tissue of a single thread, but a fabric intricately interwoven. The *Divine Comedy* and the *Faerie Queene* are stories that weave together individual, national, historical, and religious meanings. So, too, with Blake. Albion stands, also, for enslaved England, which Blake would like to see transformed into the new Jerusalem, the bride of the King. The crossing threads of the allegory need not in any way interfere with one another—the varied colours of a rich brocade do not. It is usually clear which is for the moment on the surface, as in the following beautiful lyric.

> And did those feet [Christ's] in ancient time
> Walk upon England's mountains green?
> And was the holy Lamb of God
> On England's pleasant pastures seen?
>
> And did the Countenance Divine
> Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
> And was Jerusalem builded here
> Among these dark Satanic mills?
>
> Bring me my bow of burning gold!
> Bring me my arrows of desire!
> Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
> Bring me my chariot of fire!
>
> I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.

Blake has made a distinguished, if not unique place for himself in English letters, by his sight into some of the laws of Life and the lives. Western materialism blinds and blurs; and if it is suggested to an average man that he is not his physical body, he is made very uncomfortable and regards his informant as an unpleasant individual. Blake caught the Eastern idea of hierarchies of life—of sub-human levels and super-human, also. He caught the Eastern and Christian ideal of union,—after faithful effort to follow a Master's life. There is a wide chasm

between his rock-truths of science and religion, and the dry sand of his contemporaries. Blake is one of the very few occultists in English letters. There are mystics, like Edmund Burke, a contemporary of Blake,—but what a distance between an intuitional mystic and a scientific occultist! Blake's place is not unique, because a predecessor, William Law, has the rare distinction of being an English occultist. Law, it will be remembered, learned his science from a study of Jacob Boehme's theosophical writings. Blake, too, studied Boehme, but has not indicated the extent of his indebtedness.

The scarcity of occultists in English writers shows what an important service Blake might have rendered to the English speaking world. William Law is a bridge of approach toward occultism for those who come from the side of orthodoxy. Blake might be an approach for those who are outside the religious fold. His poems drew admiration from his young contemporaries, like Wordsworth. With his scientific bent, Blake might have put into scientific expression those profound truths which the poets set forth afresh in their verse,—truths which the average reader disregards with nonchalance as abstract speculations. The cause of the Lodge might thus have been greatly advanced. But there are serious faults in the carrying out of Blake's worthy purpose,—faults so grave as to raise doubt about the value of all he has done.

His program, "to open the blind eyes and to bring out the prisoners from the prison," implies some degree of approach toward coöperation with the Master, toward discipleship. And that, in turn, implies some measure of humility. Realization of his own helplessness and his total dependence upon the Master is not wanting, as the following lines from *Jerusalem* evidence:—

> I rest not from my great task:
> To open the eternal worlds! To open the immortal eyes
> Of man inwards; into the worlds of thought: into eternity
> Ever expanding in the bosom of God, the human imagination.
> O Saviour! pour upon me thy spirit of meekness and love.
> Annihilate selfhood in me! Be thou all my life!

On the other hand, the responsibility of coöperation with the Master, conscious or unconscious, is likely in reaction to provoke human vanity. Of this likewise we should expect Blake to have an ample human share. But did he have an abnormal share, which cancels his credit of humility, and renders his contribution to humanity, not only zero, but, worse than zero, an influence for harm?

On Flaxman's authority, we have an estimate of Blake's pictorial work in his younger days by a contemporary of note, a great portraitist: "Romney," wrote Flaxman, "thinks his [Blake's] historical drawings rank with those of Michelangelo." One knows how easy it is, in casual conversation, in a book-shop or gallery, to express an opinion which one would not care to maintain formally. The circumstances in which

Romney spoke would have to be known before his meaning and intention could become clear. Sir Joshua Reynolds, another portraitist, told Blake, in conversation, "to work with less extravagance and more simplicity, and to correct his drawing." Blake threw the latter opinion aside, and disliked Reynolds for the rest of his life. Romney's flattering comparison sank into his vanity, germinated, and sprouted a tree of strange fruit. We find Blake all through his life putting himself in the company of the Renaissance Italians, as of their rank. In a letter to the friend and patron, Mr. Butts, who for several years bought whatever Blake painted, he says: "The pictures which I painted for you are equal in every part of the art, and superior in one, to anything that has been done since the age of Raphael. . . . I also know and understand and can assuredly affirm, that the works I have done for you are equal to the Caracci or Raphael (and I am now some years older than Raphael was when he died). I say they are equal to Caracci or Raphael." That would seem a superlative degree of egotism. He goes beyond that, however, in declaring: "I am more famed in Heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and those works are the delight and study of the archangels. Why then should I be anxious about the riches or fame of mortality?" It is wrong to call this quotation egotism. It is brain sickness. It shows a crossing of the boundary line between madness and sanity. Blake travelled back and forth across that line all his life.

Only a trained psychiatrist can trace the demarcation line of sanity. But we can see in Blake tendencies to unrestraint which might lead to complete unbalancing. Tatham, one of the biographers, writes: "Blake despised restraints and rules so much that his father dared not send him to school." His marriage in 1782 is a strange piece of impulsiveness. He was in love with a girl who was indifferent to his attentions. His disappointment one day, brought an expression of regret to the lips of a second girl who was standing by. Blake immediately turned to the second, saying, "You are sorry for me—then, I love you." They were shortly married. She proved an adoring creature, serving him devotedly until his death, even learning to colour his books for him.

Some persons are born exaggerators. In their colour scale, red equals normal grey. One learns to calculate their hyperboles. Others are born psychics. They see every movement of their own emotion and every mental process as a prompting from outside,—and usually the prompting comes from people of distinction. A line of old poetry passing through a psychic's head might be described as the old poet himself holding up his volume and with dramatic gesture pointing to the lines which at that moment come back in memory. One learns to normalize the psychic's experience. Many of Blake's queer expressions could be explained as ordinary exaggeration and psychism. At some point in psychism, if it be continuous and extreme, delusion begins. The deluded

person is convinced of the actuality of experiences which an outsider knows to be untrue. Blake suffered from the delusions of insanity. He was a psychic, a medium, and, therefore, undoubtedly saw swarms of figures in the psychic regions, but when he insisted upon his identification of those psychic forms, he was deluded and insane. When he was four years old, he saw God, he maintained. No one would be willing to say that the God of Blake's pictures expresses a sane man's ideas of the Absolute. Milton, Blake said, was sent down from the plane of discarnate spirits, to assist Blake in his difficulties, and also to correct errors in his own religious views. The prophet Ezekiel was another of Blake's visitants. Blake was sane in asserting the actuality of the psychic experience. He was insane in acting upon deluded interpretation of that experience. Saints are warned against trusting their visions—old teachers declare that one of the devil's favourite tricks is to dress himself up as an angel of light. Poor Blake was a victim of the old prank. His "spiritual visions" are such exceedingly unpleasant things, like bad dreams. He called them saints and angels, but we turn from them instinctively.

Beauty is almost lacking in his work, written and painted. As a writer, his literary career ended with the *Songs of Experience*. In the present article, lyrics are quoted from the "Prophetic Books." These lovely lyrics are accidental—a momentary lapse from the "free-verse" he adopted as the best medium of expression for his allegorical and cosmological views. His most important books, *Jerusalem* and *Milton,* he thought, were dictated to him by heavenly visitants,—so many lines a day. Blake said those two works were the greatest poems in the world. A brief summary has been given of the purport of the books. A reader would arrive at that summary with difficulty, because the two works, and the other "Prophetic Books" sprawl in incoherence. An irreverent and punning critic who liked the story of the *Faerie Queene* but was bored by the moral teachings, said of the allegory: "The alligator will not bite you, if you do not trouble it." His irreverence embodies a principle. The great poets constructed their poems as life is constructed. One can see life either as a succession of incidents, or as significant opportunities for discipline and instruction. One can read the *Divine Comedy* or *Pilgrim's Progress* merely for the story, or can make personal application of what he reads. The point is that the creative artist has constructed the poem in planes, as man is constructed; the poem is a true likeness of life. One can choose his plane; but in a great poem, all are there completely. This is what is meant in criticism by the technical word "verisimilitude." A writer can take a wholly imaginary person as the hero of his drama. But to that imaginary man, the dramatist must give the brain and heart, weakness and strength of an actual man. The imagined creature must be a very likeness of a real man. In Blake there is no verisimilitude. There is no human Arjuna, whose irresolution and mixed motives hold our sympathetic attention. There is only the alligator that bites. The "Prophetic Books" are a cipher, not an allegory. One

has to use a code to unravel who and what are the names that recur: Enitharmon, Bowlahoola, Golgonooza, Thammaz, Orc, Sol, Luvah, Ahania. They stand for persons and places. But they have no more life than a genealogical tree. They have no more individuality than the figures in Blake's pictures.

As a literary man, Blake's status is not likely to change permanently. He is an anthology poet. He has no whole to offer,—only extracts. This is true of his pictorial work also. Small bits of it are pleasing. But it lacks beauty. Most of it is unpleasant. Some speak of its massive strength. Keats has finely described what strength means, when it has to be spoken of in that manner as an artist's salient trait:—

> Strength alone though of the Muses born
> Is like a fallen angel: trees uptorn,
> Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres
> Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs
> And thorns of life.

Blake cultivated the grand style of Michelangelo. But too often there is no trace whatever of his model in his grotesque deformations. In particular, he was obsessed by foreshortening, especially the foreshortened arm and thigh. Tintoretto and other Italians paint daring feats of foreshortening which, however, do not leap out from their large compositions. In the New York Public Library, it is possible to see how Blake, having imagined a fine form, foreshortened it into deformity. For a book illustration, he imagined the body of an unwinged angel, descending, headforemost, with trumpet at lips, to awaken the dead. In carrying his plan into execution, he ruined the design by grotesquely and unnecessarily foreshortening the arm and thigh. The illustration was one of a set made by contract with a publisher, for an *édition de luxe*. The publisher was wily, and dishonest. He knew that Blake had a certain gift which was likely, however, to take a wild form, and he knew also that Blake was worse than temperamental about accepting suggestions. The publisher therefore tampered with the contract. He got the designs from Blake, and then gave them to a conventional Italian engraver to tone down their eccentricity and prepare them for the public. At the New York Public Library one can see Blake's original and the changes by the Italian. Blake was furious at being cheated. But the unscrupulous publisher and his conventional engraver had the better judgment. They straightened the foreshortened arm and thigh of the angel, and gave natural lines to a Michelangelesque athlete.

The infrequent shining out of beauty in the work of Blake is the more noteworthy inasmuch as the goal toward which he was striving—all that he symbolizes in the word Jerusalem—he represents as a centre where Art for the first time finds an atmosphere for expression. "I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel than the liberty both of body and mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination. O ye relig-

ious, discountenance every one among you who shall pretend to despise art and science. What is the life of man but art and science?" There may be a sense in which Blake is right. But his words recall the old Greek fable of the people who were so enamoured of the Muses that they vowed to spend days and nights in singing their praises. The Muses, however, grew very bored by those praises, and changed their foolish adorers into crickets, who could only chirp! Blake does not mention the *will,* at all, in his constructive spiritual scheme. The imagination is an important instrument. But one who wishes to become a great artist, cannot magnify the imagination and pass over the will, without becoming a "cricket." Such a one-sided course means blindness as to the value of discipline. Blake's complete lack of discipline, even his ardent admirers acknowledge. Gilchrist, his very partial biographer, summing up his long study of the man and his work, writes: "he was impatient of control, or of a law in anything,—in his Art, in his opinions on morals, religion, or what not." Gilchrist demurs at the opinion of Blake expressed by Wordsworth and Southey—"great, but undoubtedly insane genius." Gilchrist suggests that the milder word, undisciplined, or ill-balanced, be substituted for insane. After all, the point at which habitual uncontrol passes into insanity is not easy to fix precisely. But to class a man as an unbalanced genius is to rank him with the minor and not with the great.

If Blake be judged as a man of letters, there can be no doubt that his rank is far below the generation of poets who were partly his contemporaries. There was nothing unique in his literary aim. Wordsworth and Keats, two different types, each succeeded, in his own way, in vindicating a high place for the imagination, a supreme place; but it was a disciplined imagination they revered. Endeavouring to bring more of their natures under the mild yoke of discipline, they achieved the verse which is, each in its own manner, an ornament of our literature. In the fourteenth book of the *Prelude,* his spiritual autobiography, Wordsworth says of the disciplined imagination:—

> This alone is genuine liberty.

And Keats, always sensitive to transcendent beauty, which he thought might at any moment meet him face to face, wrote of it:—

> The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,
> Chasing away all worldliness and folly.

Blake aimed at the same goal as Keats and Wordsworth. He has left mere chips of beauty. He failed as artist because he would not submit to discipline.

Where Blake has an aim different from his contemporaries, and where he might have won distinction, perhaps unique, is as occultist—in his effort to work for true religion and true science. Here, too, he failed. He became lost in the psychic whirl and did not rise to clear

vision. Some of his "prophetic" works read as if he had seen the Stanzas of Dzyan, reflected upside down and grotesquely foreshortened.

> Earth was not, nor globes of attraction;
> The will of the Immortal expanded
> Or contracted his all-flexible senses;
> Death was not, but Eternal life sprung:
> . . . .
> A shriek ran through Eternity,
> And a paralytic stroke,
> At the birth of the human shadow.

There are threads of Wisdom in his confused, incoherent writing. "I give you the end of a golden string," he wrote as the first line of a poem. He gave hints of the inner Wisdom, and one who is eager, might follow the golden string until the certain Path is reached. Blake himself does not give whole cloth. He was a madman who frayed out threads and shreds from the robe of Wisdom. He might have served the Lodge and their cause. He failed and disappointed.

C. C. C.

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*A doctor who has made a specialty of nervous diseases, so we read, has found a new remedy for the blues. His prescription amounts to this: "Keep the corners of your mouth turned up; then you can't feel blue." The simple direction is: "Smile; keep on smiling; don't stop smiling." It sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Well, just try turning up the corners of your mouth, regardless of your mood, and see how it makes you feel; then draw the corners of your mouth down, and note the effect, and you will be willing to declare "there's something in it!"*—FATHER LASANCE.

# GOSSIP

THE poor word did not always have a bad meaning; it has been dragged down from high spiritual estate. In its archaic form "godsyp", it meant literally "related in God", and was used to designate a sponsor in baptism. Then it slipped a little, as words will, and came to mean a friend with whom one has familiar talk, to whom one can say anything,—the understanding friend whom we all seek, and some of us find, in this world of lonely spaces. It is comfortable to believe that this was not so much a slip as a real widening of significance, hinting that we dare only to take our ease with those who are "related to us in God". By-and-by the poor thing took a big landslide and came to mean just tattle,—leaky, vulgar, silly tattle; and that is how we use the word to-day, prefixing "personal" to emphasize its ignominy, apparently quite forgetting that "personal gossip" *can* be the most loving and understanding thing in the world.

Gossip in one form or another is inseparable from existence; it is one expression of the inevitable preoccupation of life with living, and it will continue until the mind of man shall cease to register reaction to the destinies of man. As with most inevitable things, it is potent for both good and ill. In its silent form, which we call meditation, its potency is highest,—here, to make us safe, it must positively be spelt "godsyp". It is probably not confined to humans. Birds, for instance, are inveterate gossips. They often sound like what country people call "a good tell", but this turns suddenly acrimonious if they get personal, and bird rushes at bird with indignant outcries when statements are repeated. Much misunderstanding and unhappiness among the nests results from this habit. You may sometimes see two horses in their lunch hour gossiping about a mean driver; and who can blame them? As to the poor unresting bandar-logs, they have no conversational alternative except scolding. When two talk in a corner of their cage, throwing uneasy glances behind them, it is easy to see that they are saying the nastiest things possible about the others, and who can blame *them?* No doubt even fishes gossip. As to human beings, if they ever stop long enough to give themselves a chance, it is considered the correct thing to condemn soundly, and utterly to repudiate, the pursuit; at least it is felt that though one's own gossip is harmless and excusable, everyone else should undoubtedly be muzzled.

On the low plane where it usually prevails, gossip is a hideous thing—it all depends upon the plane. The bandar-logs themselves cannot sink far below the detestable "he said" and "she said" and "I was told not to repeat this, *but*", and so on, for ever and for ever. This can be done without brains, when it bores to tears; and without heart, and then the devils have entered in. The fruit of it is always poison, an irritant

poison fatal to the germs of mutual understanding and good will, and almost impossible to eradicate from the system. Most people have the grace to be ashamed of this plane even while they function on it.

If the matter were thus simple, it could be dismissed by the self-respecting with a final and all-including "thou shalt not", but the roots of gossip are buried deep in holy ground. The fine flower of brotherly love springs from the same soil, for the instinctive preoccupation of humanity with humanity shall not produce only weeds. Art also flowers splendidly here, and all Art gossips. We have been told that its province is to "purge us with pity and with terror" and for that it must tell us of ourselves, it must deal with people, with the desperate and hopeful little race of man. Every real poem, every true picture, every honest book, and even most dishonest ones, are efforts to bridge gulfs, to establish relationships, to break up the sense of separateness. The artist, be he never so coolly detached, is avid for συμπάθεια "a feeling together". He says in effect, "this is how life looks to me—can such fulfilment be mine that it also looks so to you?" He is empowered to express us to ourselves, and the great things of Art live on and on because they have gained the assent of humanity—"yea, thus, and thus, it is with us."

> And my song from beginning to end
> I found again in the heart of a friend—

no fame, no wealth can be named with this rapture. It is another way of finding what love finds directly, and it is gained largely by sublimated gossip.

But, it may be objected, is Art to be held guiltless? By no means: in effect one is torn every day between reverent gratitude and a desire to box its ears. When the silly world, calling for stories like a child at dusk, is lured by psychic rubbish, or worse, down wasteful and forbidden ways, then Art stands arraigned and our souls must be the judge.

The problem for disciples is how to deflect this incessant stream of comment on life, into some channel where it may serve the Master's purposes, instead of balking them; how to lift our interest in each other from the low material, the dangerous psychic, to a higher plane; how to make the Master accessory to the fact.

Personal gossip on the psychic plane is a thing compared to which the "he said" and "she said" of the illiterate, is a harmless nursery game. It is often delicately elusive, entertaining, lenient, sporadically charitable. It is indulged in by people who have seen so much of life, lived through so many stories themselves, sat through so many plays and faced so many human problems, that they have grown expert; they honestly, as it is phrased, "take an interest in life for its own sake", but the step from this to making a playground of the sanctities of

friendship, is sometimes a short one. Those people who pride themselves on psychological acumen are the *enfants terribles* of this game, and it is played by tongues that have not lost their power to wound.

The theosophical student is largely recruited from this class, for Theosophy does not appeal to the stupid, but to people of aroused psychic force. The best thing that can happen to such a student is to be brought up with what is known as "a round turn". If so fortunate as to be attracted to a group where only the highest teaching prevails, he cannot fail to be impressed with the irresistible stress laid upon the matter of Love and all Love's discretions. He finds that any rules given for his guidance are based on the absolute determination that the individualities of others shall be reverently screened; that a spiritual *noli me tangere* is theosophical etiquette; he finds that to be spiritually well bred is to hear no evil, speak no evil, think no evil; he finds "the new commandment" which He gave unto us, printed in invisible ink on every page, and the Angel of Silence, finger on lip, awaiting him at every turn; in short, he finds that the Theosophical Movement is actually based on the brotherhood of man, just as it always said it was. If he also finds himself surprised, so much the more goose he. With all this he discovers, if he did not know it before, that the warp and woof of life is so heart-thrilling, so love-stirring, so watched by Great Ones who hardly venture to breathe upon it as they weave, that there is no place for the little personal judgments of little personal people.

"Let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay", was the admonition given to his chêlas by the Prince of Gossips, and then and there he gave them practical demonstrations of his method. Well he knew that the poor things who hung about him would not listen unless they were gossipped to, and so he gossipped, but with what imperturbable discretion, with what sublime impersonality! The stories he told them were all about people, and are as full of human interest to-day as when the silent thousands drank them in. They are as minutely "noted" as the baldest realism of the most realism-drunk devotee; they are so entertaining that children listen and say, "tell it again", and so close to the heart of life that they have served as a running comment on life from that day to this. Only once through all the parables were names mentioned—those of Dives and Lazarus—and, as they were both dead, discretion was not marred. "A certain king made a marriage for his son", "There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard", "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves". Observe that careful use of the word "certain", bestowing all the vraisemblance of a name. "Jump right in with your human appeal —give it to them hot", demands the slangy twentieth century editor. Two thousand years ago *he* "gave it to them hot"; *he* met the unappeasable craving with the undying genre. True stories he told them, as true as Love, as true as Life, for they were spoken by the spirit to the spirit—they were gossip raised to the spiritual plane.

But the student of the Wisdom wants more than this. "Why speak ye unto them in parables", the disciples asked; and the answer was, "Because it is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given". Perhaps some of us begin to sense dimly that deepening and widening of consciousness for which we watch and pray, that other plane where deep shall call unto deep and talk shall be transcended.

Plotinus is not speaking of the Masters, but of disciples who have begun to understand, when he says:—

"They see themselves in others. For all things are transparent, and there is nothing dark or resisting, but everyone is manifest to everyone internally and all things are manifest; for light is manifest to light. For everyone has all things in himself, so that all things are everywhere. . . . and infinite is the glory."

L. S.

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*Here are some little practices very easy and of wonderful efficacy, for keeping up union of hearts, that source of happiness here below. They are summed up in this word: be always amiable. For this purpose, observe faithfully the following rules:* 1. *Smile habitually.* 2. *Never answer by a NO, or a negative sign when a superior commands.* 3. *Spare others all the trouble that you can take on yourself.* 4. *Never show yourself discontented or sulky.* 5. *Repress every impatient gesture, every unguarded word.* 6. *Let a kind word accompany the orders given to inferiors.* 7. *Even when a reproof is well deserved, never administer it with rudeness or bitterness.* 8. *Do not forget the little formulas of politeness, the amiable expressions that are usual: "thank you", "if you please", etc. We grant that to keep up such practices we must sometimes make sacrifices; but just as there is no happiness without sacrifice, so also every sacrifice brings with it a little happiness. Let us only try, and we shall soon regret not having acted thus all our life.*—THE ART OF BEING HAPPY.

# "BY WHOM?"

## KENA UPANISHAD

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT WITH AN INTERPRETATION

II

*If thou thinkest: I know It well, little, indeed, of a truth, knowest thou that form of the Eternal—that form which thou art, that form which is in the Divine Powers; but if thou sayest: It is to be searched for and sought out, then I think It is known of thee.*

*He who says: I think not that I know It well, nor do I not know It—he, indeed, knows It. He who says: I know It, knows It not; he who thinks: I know It not, he knows It.*

*Of whom It is not understood, of him It is understood; of whom It is understood, he knows It not. It is uncomprehended of those who comprehend; It is comprehended of those who comprehend It not.*

*When It is known through illumination which turns toward It, and so is understood, then he who thus knows It, finds immortality. Through that Supreme Self he finds valour; through illumination he finds immortality.*

*If he has come to the knowledge of It in this present life, this is the supreme good. If he has not come to a knowledge of It, great is his loss, his fall. Searching for, and discerning It in all things that are, sages, going forth from this world, become immortal.*

THE subject of these enigmatical sentences is the Eternal, the Supreme Self of all beings. And in this second name of that ineffable Mystery one may, perhaps, find a way to an understanding of these riddles.

Let us begin by realizing that Spiritual Life, the Eternal, the Supreme Self cannot be known by the lower, external mind; the marvellous piece of machinery which we have through ages developed, to deal with material objects and conditions; the mind which determines the nature of things external by measuring them, by comparing, by weighing one against another; the mind on which we depend in the practical things of daily life.

This wonderful piece of machinery has been specialized for exactly these practical ends, and has a certain quite limited scope. It can weigh and measure and compare. It can never, because of its very nature, tell us about the real nature of anything; can never tell us what anything really is. This limitation is of the essence of its nature, because it is of no practical value to us, in our daily lives, to know the real nature of things, any more than it would be of practical value to rabbits to know the botanical classification of the different grasses. Rabbits can get along quite well with a relative knowledge, the knowledge of the flavour

and wholesomeness of different green things; any further knowledge would be a useless encumbrance.

So in us the lower, external mind, the mind which looks outward upon external nature, needs only relative knowledge of things, and not a knowledge of what they really are. It was brought into being for just that purpose, and is, by its nature, strictly limited to that function.

But there is within us another power, the beginning of which is intuition. Bergson, who has approached nearest to the Eastern Wisdom in his consideration of these high problems, rightly says that this power, intuition, is not a machine which measures and compares, but is the representative in us, in our inmost being, of the Infinite Life; is at once the Infinite Life and the most real element of our being; and, because it is this, intuition can give us some perception, some experience, of Infinite Being; not through a process of outward viewing, of weighing and measuring and comparing, but through direct spiritual self-consciousness, through being that which we know.

The external mind, therefore, cannot know Life, the Eternal, the Supreme Self of all beings. But, through a reversal of the tendency of our lives, through a withdrawing of ourselves from the entanglements of external things and a turning inward and upward within ourselves, we can awaken intuition, we can reach spiritual self-consciousness; we can begin to realize the Eternal, because the Eternal is the very essence of that new part of ourselves which we have awakened to consciousness; or, to speak more correctly, that part of ourselves to a consciousness of which we have awakened. We begin to know the Eternal by awaking to a realization that we are of the Eternal, that we are in the Eternal; that the Eternal is that within us, which both knows and is known. It is a process, not of mental measurement and comparison, but of spiritual self-consciousness.

A part of the lasting tragedy of human life is this: The lower, external mind not only cannot understand the real nature of things, the real nature of the Infinite Life, the Eternal, and our relation with that Life; the lower mind cannot even recognize that knowledge of this kind exists, nor is such knowledge of even the slightest interest to the lower mind. It will of itself never even ask the question.

But, in virtue of the divinity within mankind, in virtue of the spiritual stature and endowment which renders his inner nature to some degree self-conscious, there is, within him, some measure of intuition. And this first glimmer of intuition does ask the infinite question; does concern itself with the reality of things, does seek to sound the infinitudes. This it does, because it is itself of the essence of the Infinite.

Intuition, therefore, puts the question concerning things infinite. The lower, external mind catches the reflection of this question from the intuition above and within; seizes on the question, and strains its powers to find the answer. This would seem to be the motive and driving power of all rationalistic philosophies.

But, having undertaken this large task, the external mind carries with it its inherent limitations. It is not equipped, nor was it constructed, to perform work of this kind. Therefore, while straining at the task, the lower mind cannot accomplish it; it is fatally pursued by its inherent limitedness.

Seeking to unravel the secret of the external world, the lower mind discovers matter; discovers the elements that make up matter, defining these elements in terms of weight and measurement, and their interactions among themselves; discovers molecules within the elements, atoms within the molecules, ions or electrons within the atoms; and, at last, is as far from the ultimate solution as it was at the outset.

In exactly the same way, the lower mind measures the world and its girth; goes beyond the earth to the moon and sun and the whole solar system, measuring and weighing these; passes beyond the solar system to the starry hosts; and then, as before, comes to a halt; recognizes that it cannot conceive the universe either as having a boundary or as having no boundary. While ascertaining comparative measures and distances, it has learned nothing of realities. Everything is described in terms of something else; there is no finality, or possible finality.

Therefore all rationalistic philosophies end, and inevitably end, in agnosticism. That is the one logical conclusion to the search for knowledge in that way, by that instrument.

The tragedy, therefore, is this: That, having been inspired and set in motion by intuition, which alone puts the questions he seeks to answer, the rationalistic philosopher instantly turns his back upon intuition and commits the task to the lower mind, which is incapable of finding the answer. Having begun with intuition, he should go on with intuition; pressing with his whole life-force and energy in that direction, he will find it possible, with the co-operation of Divine Powers which are waiting to help him, to arouse intuition into a flame of light, a perceptive power which really knows the Eternal, because it is itself of the essence of the Eternal; a power which will know the Eternal as Infinite, Immortal; knowing this by the direct experience of spiritual consciousness; and, further, recognizing this radiant inner Life as the Supreme Self, the Supreme Life of all beings. Spiritual intuition recognizes that Life is infinite; in knowing, it therefore at the same time knows that it can never be completely known; that it can never be fully comprehended, girdled by knowledge. This recognition comes as an early experience of intuition, and is testified to by all, in all times and lands, in whom spiritual intuition has awakened. Yet, recognizing that the Life is infinite, and never fully to be known, intuition at the same time recognizes a kindred infinity within its own being, and sees for itself the promise of an immortal, infinitely growing Light.

While the lower mind cannot lay hold on realities, nor grasp what belongs to intuition, to spiritual consciousness, nevertheless the lower

mind is not in underlying substance different from intuition. It is rather a part of intuition, but crystallized, set, specialized; just as the hand is specialized, from the general substance of the body, for a limited use. But the specialized organ pays the penalty of its specialization and cannot re-become the general substance. A bird's wing is, in reality, a five-fingered hand specialized for flight; but it cannot rebecome a hand. The hoof of a horse is a still more specialized five-fingered hand; it can become neither hand nor wing.

But the important thing is, that the general substance can take this or that special form, because it has in it all that will be developed in either special form. So the intuition has in it the essence of all the specialized forms and means of knowledge which are crystallized in the lower mind. It is a noetic power with infinite power of application.

We shall miss the real purpose of these considerations if we think of them as applying only to forms and means of knowledge. The real application is to being rather than knowing only. It is not so much a question of spiritual knowledge as of spiritual life; of the awakened spiritual will, rather than of new modes of knowing.

It is not enough to do what has been suggested: to turn backward and inward the perceptive powers; we must turn ourselves backward and inward, renouncing not so much the lower mind, as the whole life of the lower self, with the whole body of corrupt inclinations and tendencies that make it up. It is a question of repentance, conversion, redemption through the divine grace of Spiritual Powers.

But the life of the lower self is tenaciously defended by the lower mind, which is the acute, resourceful, obedient servitor of the lower will. Therefore we can make the conflict easier by solving, to some degree, the problem of the lower mind, thus weakening its prestige and shaking its despotic sway. This is a means, a partial means only. The great battle must be fought out in the moral nature, with the light and help of Spiritual Powers; Powers which are constrained by the infinite Unity to lend their help. And the name of that constraint is Divine Love.

Keeping these general considerations in mind, it will be less difficult to read the riddle of the sentences translated:

If thou thinkest: I know the Infinite Eternal well, completely, that Eternal Life of which thou art, of which the Divine Powers are, undivided parts,—little dost thou know. It is to be searched for and sought after in the inner, spiritual nature, which is to be entered by the door of sacrifice and aspiration, with the help of the Divine Powers; then, indeed, it will be known.

He who says: I think not that I know it well, so as completely to comprehend and girdle it with my knowledge; nor do I not know it, since it is the essence of my spiritual nature, and therefore my innermost consciousness and will, he, indeed, knows the Eternal.

With these clues and examples, it will not be hard to read the ancient riddle.

*The Eternal, verily, won a victory for the Bright Powers. In the victory of That, of the Eternal, the Bright Powers magnified themselves. They, considering, said: Of us, verily, is this victory; of us, verily, is this might, said they.*

*That Eternal knew this thought of theirs. To them, verily, That manifested Itself. They knew It not. What apparition is this? said they.*

*They spoke to the Fire-god: Thou All-permeating, discover thou what this apparition is! said they.*

*Be it so! said he.*

*The Fire-god ran up to That.*

*That said to him: Who art thou?*

*The Fire-god, verily, am I! said he. The All-permeating am I!*

*If that be so, what valour is in thee? said That.*

*Even this all can I burn up, whatever there be, here in the world! said he.*

*Before him That laid down a blade of grass.*

*Burn this! said That.*

*He went forward toward it with all swiftness. He was not able to burn it.*

*From That, verily, he turned back.*

*I have not been able to discover what that apparition is! said he.*

*And so they spoke to the Wind-god: Thou Wind-god, discover thou what this apparition is! said they.*

*Be it so! said he.*

*The Wind-god ran up to That.*

*That said to him: Who art thou?*

*The Wind-god, verily, am I! said he. He who rests in the Mother am I!*

*If that be so, what valour is in thee? said That.*

*Even this all can I take up, whatever there be, here in the world! said he.*

*Before him That laid down a blade of grass.*

*Take up this! said That.*

*He went forward toward it with all swiftness. He was not able to take it up.*

*From That, verily, he turned back.*

*I have not been able to discover what that apparition is! said he.*

*And so they spoke to the Sky-lord: Thou Might-possessor, discover thou what this apparition is! said they.*

*Be it so! said he.*

*The Sky-lord ran up to That. That vanished from before him.*

*The Sky-lord there, verily, in the shining ether, came upon a Woman greatly radiant, Uma, daughter of the Snowy Mountain.*

*To her the Sky-lord spoke: What is this apparition? said he.*

*She spoke: The Eternal, verily! said she. In the victory of That ye were magnifying yourselves, said she.*

*From her, verily, he knew: It is the Eternal.*

The passage just translated is, perhaps, the most delicious bit of Sanskrit prose that has come down to us; fascinating in the great simplicity of its style, charming in its sense of humour.

It is, at the same time, one of the deepest passages in all the Upanishads, the profoundest books of the Eastern Wisdom.

We can, therefore, hope to discover only a part of its mystery, which is, indeed, the supreme mystery of the Eternal.

We can best seek the meaning of this splendidly vivacious piece of symbolism by translating certain sentences from a Vedanta catechism attributed to one of the great Masters of the Eastern Wisdom, Shankaracharya, who both edited and commented on the greater Upanishads, though the commentaries we have were probably written not by that Master but by some of his disciples.

The sentences are these:

The Supreme Self, attributing itself to, and becoming self-conscious in, the natural body, is called the All-pervading (Vishva, Vaishvanara).

The Supreme Self, attributing itself to, and becoming self-conscious in, the mental body, is called the Radiant (Taijasa).

The Supreme Self, attributing itself to, and becoming self-conscious in, the causal body (Karana sharira) is called the Illuminated (Prajna).

The Supreme Self (Atma) in its own form, is Infinite Being, Infinite Consciousness, Infinite Bliss.

There is, therefore, on the one hand, the Supreme Self, the Eternal. On the other hand, there are the three bodies, counting from below upward, the natural body, the mental body, the causal body. And, in each of these three bodies, there is the apparition, the presentment, of the Supreme Self: the self in that body. In the natural body is the vital, natural self; the self common to all living things, the all-permeating, all-pervading vital fire. In the mental body is the personal self, in the higher sense of personality, the personal man redeemed. In the causal body is the self of illumination, the permanent individuality, as distinguished from the true personality.

One might, perhaps, distinguish these three as the self of the ordinary man, the self of the full disciple, and the self of the Master.

This seems to be very closely the ground covered by the first, or microcosmic, meaning of our ancient parable.

The victory which the Eternal won for the Bright Powers would appear to be the victory of manifestation, of existence in manifested life.

This manifestation, like the unrolling of a curtain, is let down through the Three Worlds, the spiritual world, the mid-world and the natural world.

In the lowest of the three, the natural world, Life is manifested as the habitual self, perhaps it would be better to say, the vital self, in the natural body.

On its own plane, natural life, vitality, pervades all things and sets all things aflame with vital breath. Through that power, the whole natural universe moves and breathes and has its being.

But, faced with the mystery of Life, the natural self is impotent. Even a blade of grass presents an unconquerable enigma. The digestive powers even of a rabbit can consume the blade of grass. But the natural intelligence even of the wisest botanist cannot solve the ultimate problem of the blade of grass, the mystery of the being that is within it.

For the self of the mental body, which begins where reflective self-consciousness begins, but which fully disentangles itself from the natural self only when the disciple comes to full self-consciousness in the mental body, the ultimate mystery is equally impenetrable. The activity of the mental self, like the wind of heaven, sweeps to the uttermost bounds of visible space, only to be completely baffled. The intelligence of that self cannot take up even a blade of grass, and discern its final secret.

We come now to deep waters; waters considerably beyond the depth of the present interpreter. But, in the writings attributed to Shankaracharya, there is what would appear to be a clue. It is said there that the causal body has two aspects: on the one hand, it is the vesture of the illuminated consciousness of the Master, the immortal; on the other hand, the causal body, since it is the basis of individuality, and, therefore, of separate existence, of differentiation, is, in a sense, opposed to the Oneness of the Eternal. The heterogeneous cannot comprehend the homogeneous. The differentiated cannot comprehend the undifferentiated.

Looking at this from another point of view: Even when the disciple has attained to mastery, fully awakening the illuminated self-consciousness in the causal body, there appear to be two alternative ways open: He may either elect to enter Nirvana, which an august authority has called "a glorified selfishness"; or he may renounce his reward, and enter the gate of absolute sacrifice.

Only if he choose the second alternative, has he entered into the true mystery of the Eternal.

It would seem that there are in him the two counterbalancing tendencies: on the one hand, the causal body which, as the basis of separateness, is biased toward separate existence, individual Nirvana; on the other hand, the illuminated consciousness, the very light of the Eternal, inspiring him to renounce individual bliss and to throw his whole life and being into the continuing struggle of All that lives, the eternal warfare for spiritual victory.

But these are somewhat rash speculations, venturings into too deep water.

Besides its application to the microcosm, to sevenfold man, our ancient parable has also its macrocosmic side, referring to the same principles in their universal aspect, as principles of worlds and solar systems. This macrocosmic side is brought out in the passage which follows, and which completes this Upanishad:

*Therefore, verily, these Bright Powers stand in rank above the other Bright Powers, namely, the Fire-god, the Wind-god, the Sky-lord; for they touched That most nearly. And because he first knew that It is the Eternal, therefore the Sky-lord surpasses in rank the other Bright Powers; for he touched That most nearly, he first knew That, saying, It is the Eternal.*

*Of That, this is the teaching: That flashed forth from the lightning, like the twinkling of an eye. This concerns the celestial Powers.*

*Now, as concerns the Self: To That, intelligence approaches; and through That, the will constantly remembers That. This, verily, is named adoration of That; as adoration of That, it is to be approached with reverence. He who knows That thus, to him all beings are subject in loving obedience.*

*Thou hast said: Master, tell the Upanishad, the secret teaching! The Upanishad is declared to thee; we have, of a truth, declared the Upanishad concerning the Eternal; for this Upanishad, fervour, control, holy work are the support; the Vedas are its members; truth is its abode.*

*He who rightly knows this secret teaching, putting away darkness and sin, in the unending heavenly world which is to be won he stands firm, he stands firm.*

We have, perhaps, in this last passage, the clue to the most mysterious personage in our ancient parable: Uma, daughter of the Snowy Mountain, Uma Haimavati.

In the later and more exoteric, but still mystical, tradition of India, Uma is the consort of Shiva, Third Person of the Trimurti, the Lord of mystical wisdom, whose name signifies the August, the Benign. It is, therefore, the hidden wisdom, personified as the child of the Himalaya, who reveals the Eternal.

Curiously, while the inner significance of the name of this Woman greatly radiant is lost in Sanskrit, it must have been clear in the older tongue which lies behind Sanskrit; for it remains in a group of younger Aryan tongues called Slavonic. Here, the root Um is the common word for intelligence.

Cosmic Intelligence, therefore, on the one hand, the divine power which has been called Cosmic Electricity; and, on the other, that spiritual intelligence in man, the first manifestation of which is intuition, which steadily grows, as we watch and worship, till it becomes the infinite Light, revealing the Supreme Eternal; such would seem to be the significance of Uma, daughter of the Snowy Mountain, consort of the mystic Lord.

C. J.

# LIFE AND DEATH

THIS morning I awoke to find a bitterly cold blizzard blowing, and everything within sight outside, from the mountain tops down, thinly covered on their windward side with frozen drifted snow, though it is now late spring, and we are in the semi-tropics. Not so many days ago a hot dry wind, laden with sand, blew in from the Mojave desert, while an almost melting, stifling heat from a blazing sun penetrated every shade. Along the great "fault" running eastward from here, and for miles on either side, the ground has shaken more violently and frequently of late. Everything has seemed as if in physiographical revolt,—as if refusing to submit to some higher decree, or trying to assert itself should the earth be about to shape some new feature.

From the window I saw our lone cypress tree bravely bend from the storm, time and again, as with set moral purpose, like some human creature stooping to adverse circumstances whilst refusing to break. Its nearest companion, a pepper tree, was being shorn of its small boughs and leaf and berry filigree; the birds we love so much had left their nests and found shelter in the thick vine climbing the house. Our flowers, too, were broken, and looked surprised and bewildered as the wind ruthlessly stripped them of their blossoms.

Standing there and musing, similar scenes of storm and restive elemental extremes, rebellion, breakage and strain, the possible throes of new things in the making came to me, but in human nature and life, and passed in widening sequence through my mind as associated ideas will do, until I stood in thought, as in like moods before, at the always half opened door of death itself, that greatest of all changes. Then I thought of a letter, unanswered these many months, eventually to find it in my inside coat pocket, where I had put it, intending to write in answer soon.

The writer of the letter described to me Macdonald's last moments. How she was with him alone, and that as he sank unconscious toward the end, the writer felt what seemed to her like the stillness that follows some deeply felt, reverently spoken benediction, which filled the room; though the dying man had not said a word, nor given any sign. She did not know why, but she thought this might always be, when so valourous and strong a soul as Mac was freed by death; that possibly we sensed more keenly and directly the soul's finer life and influence at the moment of its passing. And she wrote, asking, could I explain, or give her some thoughts of my own, to make the cause and reason for this just a little more clear? I shall now try to do this—speaking to you, my friend—from the fragments of teaching I have gathered here and there, although the incidents of our inner life at death are not made

visible to such as you and me, save as we can see them reflected in some simile, and then only as in a glass darkened by our own and this world's sin and shadow.

Most of us have read that when one is drowning, the principal scenes and events and most intimate associations in the life then seemingly closing, unfold to outer memory. Well, this is always true at death, I understand, when the soul, to the extent that it had life in us, recalls to inner memory, and to deeper, spiritual consciousness its own purpose and impulses, and so gathers from the field of our past work and thought and imaging, the few small gleanings which reflect its own pure light, such as were made aglow with the sacrificial essence of loving deeds; to the end that it may weave, as it were, from the life-stuff of these, a white and seamless and more befitting outer garment, suggestive of the one He wore, so difficult and costly to make, in which to enter heaven. This will be partially unknown to the outer mind, or to that "Raymond"-like after-death personality we so commonly mistake for the Immortal Self.

I have often pictured the soul thus pausing in self-examination at the close of its life-day, conscious of its spiritual successes and failures, victories and defeats, and of the joy and pain of it all,—the Master's power and love made manifest, and all human affections deepened and strengthened.

Yet, after all, I should like to make clearer the life and actuality that no words, least of all my own, can convey,—though they may perhaps serve to make Mac's parting response more intelligible, and as real and lasting as he intended it to be. I think that we should all feel something of this when by the side of one who is dying, if only we could be silent and still, and not too benumbed by our grieving.

If we may venture further, where neither words nor similes belong, and where time as we know it does not enter, it would seem that the moment of our going is known, and that the compassionate Angels of Death are there—saddened or made joyous by the memory's kaleidoscopic record of our life as we and they now see it, divested of its outward seeming, its motives and merit laid bare,—and who make of death a holy thing, our life's closing sacrament, to some a beatific vision of the Master himself.

If in that bright and searching light, it is seen that we have lived as selfishly as most of us have done; or that we have idled dreamily our precious time and life away, which it cost Him so much to give us,—as you and I and so many alas! are doing—so that we did not fully provide for a spiritually conscious life hereafter, and the darkness caused by this proves overwhelming at the close, then we shall sleep as in the night, but to dream of Him still, where other guardian Immortals in the Cause of the Masters keep silent watch and ward over the slumbering souls of men, until the Angels of the Dawn shall call us to childhood and to outer life, to our daily task once more.

Only in the creative light of day, and by continual hard inner work, can we earn and receive in full that wage of holiness, our spiritually self-conscious life and immortality. And night and day, our sleeping and waking, our nightly journey back to Him, to refresh us for our daily heavenward toil, were in the beginning God's given symbol to us of our ever-recurring life and death.

Something of communion with one's own Master in soundest sleep, I am told, is in a measure true even for the worst amongst us, so be it that we have not sinned altogether beyond pardon. Were it not so, we could not go so buoyantly from day to day as we do; for most men and women, deprived of such nightly inner life and daily support, would soon fall wholly exhausted by the struggle, or become insane.

Perhaps the reason why the sacred books, both of the east and of the west, invariably allude to after-death consciousness in the metaphors of sleep and dreaming, is because only these will adequately express, in our psychologically imperfect language, our common spiritual dormancy as compared with the fully awakened and divinely illumined consciousness of a Master of Life, or with that of a disciple, or saint. These, by virtue and strong aspiration, and ceaseless devotion in life, have so far wrested the victory from death as to have awakened from their age-long, inner slumber to get a glimpse of the eternal morning sun; to sense something of its glory, and of the life and beauty of the Master's world—while we still sleep maybe, or are scarce half awake to the possibilities of inner life.

That long silent, peaceful-seeming night which we call death, is more gestative and more reminiscent of life by far than any dream could be. Our loved ones are indeed there, they whom we love and leave behind, with those who have gone before. As our beclouded vision then grows clearer, we shall see them as in our highest moments we knew them inwardly to be, clothed with a radiance not yet visible to us, as so often and so truly we have been told. Nor need they be any less living and human to us. The seen and unseen worlds, their planes of life, are said to interpenetrate, so the way between them is always open. And we have only to be sufficiently clean of heart to feel inwardly near one to another, or to be conscious of a lost and loved one's presence, and to commune inwardly with them. For truly to love and to be loved, and to know how to love, are part of our everlasting reward.

The depth and intensity of our devotion, our daily offerings of prayer and self-sacrifice, and the will and endeavour to obey and hourly to reach up to our Master while we are here, will be the measure of our abiding joy and conscious communion with Him hereafter.

Here I would like to remind you of the signs at the cross-roads, placed there by Masters and Disciples; their many written warnings, all so needful at this time of perilous psychic bypaths leading downwards and away from the soul; and of that "road to Endor," so disastrous in the end for all concerned. Yet it tempts the many who selfishly mourn,

indifferent to the soul's immediate need at passing, of quiet and recuperation,—a need as great as of our prayers and vicarious intercession. I read Sir Oliver Lodge's article on the church and psychical research*. Intended as an earnest plea to churchmen and religious to strengthen by spiritism their solace of hope and comfort to the bereaved, it would rather tend subtly to undermine our essential faith in things of the immortal life which, with our physical and psychical eyes, we shall never see. The author seems unintentionally to deny by implication the very goodness of God, and our hidden approach to Him. To me it is again the echo of that far, familiar cry,—"Lo here! Lo there!"—a cry to worship at the shrine of some "borrowed" faith, instead of at Calvary or at the altar of the Living Christ. As if merely for the fee paid, we all could rise to the plane of life where the Masters are!

But what of the personality after death, in whom we are so much interested? Our personal life is a borrowed one; it rightfully belongs to the soul, as you already know. And at that parting of the ways in the "intermediate state," all that in our personal life lacked the soul's touch of inner life and virtue and beauty, all which the soul cannot then reclaim, continues until the soul's sustaining energies are spent; then it, too, will "sleep"; its animated consciousness held suspended against the day when the soul, then at rest, shall return to its personal life and outer labours.

We must know that hell, as well as heaven, has its many mansions; and that our after death experiences can never be exactly alike, any more than our lives are alike here, though we all live subject to the same general laws.

Still, what of Mac? you may ask. He chose to take up the Cross, and to follow wheresoever it led more than most men do, though he had only himself to give, so that he passed through life's cleansing flames when here, as you may have observed. His passage back to the Master, whose ever more abundant life flowed out to him, was thus made conscious, swift and sure.

LABOURING LAYMAN.

* *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1920.

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*Love God, and walk uprightly; do good, and never mind what others say.*—ITALIAN PROVERB.

# DANTE SKETCHES

DANTE was a mystic. This word has many meanings; but choose whichever you will,—so it be related to true and high things and not their counterfeit,—and I believe Dante has at once fulfilled it in himself, and is its interpreter. For Dante is one of the great men of all time, as well as one of the great writers. It is my belief that he could not have written as he did without a large measure of direct knowledge of the "high fantasies" he described, as against imaginative perception of them. He had not merely the capacity to transmit a poetic inspiration, which all true poets have, but he was self-conscious in that very world of inspiration. Dante *knew* whereof he spoke; and there is repeated evidence that he deliberately set himself to interpret divine things to his fellow-men.

To read Dante is to approach the mysteries of the Kingdom. Only the great scriptures of the world exceed him in depth of wisdom and beauty of form. He is so far greater than even the best of poets, that whole generations of men have failed to catch more than an echo of his true message. A host of commentators have busied themselves with the intellectual setting, the forms of symbolism, the technique of his art; but though a few have revealed his mind, scarcely one has understood his heart. "Dante," says a kindred, though a lesser spirit, Shelley, was "the Lucifer of that starry flock which in the thirteenth century shone forth from republican Italy, as from a heaven, into the darkness of the benighted world. His very words are instinct with spirit; each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought; and many yet lie covered in the ashes of their birth, and pregnant with the lightning which has as yet found no conductor. All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially. Veil after veil may be undrawn, and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed. A great poem is a fountain forever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and age has exhausted all its divine effluence which their particular relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and an unconceived delight."

Dante approached very near the Light—that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

> "But I already of myself was such as he would have me;
> Because my sight, becoming purged, now more and more was entering through the ray of the deep Light which in Itself is true.
> Thence forward was my vision, mightier than our discourse, which faileth at such sight, and faileth memory at so great outrage."[1]

Because Dante was a great poet he was necessarily an interpreter of the spiritual world, and of spiritual laws. All "high poetry", because it

[1] *Paradiso*, xxxiii, 50-57.

is "infinite", is also divine; it is wisdom as well as knowledge, goodness as well as virtue, beauty as well as loveliness. True poetry speaks not only with the cadences of an eternal harmony, but also with something of its compelling mystery, of its other-world authority. Poetry takes us towards—the highest poetry into—the home of all our aspirations, to the source of all our longings. It lifts us by the dynamic power of its own contact with creative force, out of our subjection to the chaos of material and psychic existence. "Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man." Dante was more than "the hierophant of an unapprehended inspiration",—he was an integral part of that inspiration because of what he was, and his poetry interpreted more of himself than is possible for most poets.

Dante's special genius, then, found expression in a sustained and determined effort to make the unseen real, the invisible visible. Never has a poet used the creative imagination, the image-making faculty, so deliberately, to translate the things of eternity into the limitations of time and space. He has an extraordinary gift of creating in the hearts of his readers the emotions, the aspirations, of his own soul. He has a power of sympathy which draws them into his own consciousness; he has a bewitching alchemy of words which resolves their intellectual prejudice and makes them one with him. His eyes see life as reflecting the soul, see nature as the vesture of God's loveliness; his piercing vision penetrates this vesture to the corresponding spiritual life that gave it birth.

> "The dawn was conquering the morning air, which fled before, so that from afar I recognized the trembling of the sea. . . .
> At the hour in which the swallow begins to tune her sad complaint unto the morning, perchance in memory of her former woes,
> And when our soul, more of a wanderer from the flesh and less a prisoner of thoughts, is, as it were, divinely free for her visions:" . . . [2]

By such swift intuition Dante connects the breathless hush of dawn, the first swallow twittering in a quiet sky, with that moment when the soul, burdened with the mystery of renewed contact with the spiritual world, pauses before returning to its house of flesh with messages and dreams, with "visions of the night". He has caught the soul of dawn, he reveals the source of its charm, he tells us why Nature is what it is.

There is no higher poetry than this. It sees life in terms of the soul, for purposes of the soul. It is closest to scripture and merges into it.

Few have even attempted what Dante accomplishes in every canto. Perhaps Aeschylus, the Book of Job, and parts of *Paradise Lost* and of *Prometheus* are the only conscious efforts to write such poetry that the West can show,—to which some might add the canticles of St. John of the Cross. Where, for instance, has humility, its essence and its symbology, been more delicately indicated than in the following lines—every word of

[2] *Purgatorio*, i, 115 and ix, 13-18.

which demands meditation? An Angel, nowhere named but quickly recognized, approaches:

> "To us came the beauteous creature, robed in white, and his countenance such as the morning star which trembles.
> His arms he opened, and then outspread his wings; he said: 'Come; here nigh are the steps, and easily now is ascent made.'
> To this announcement few be they who come. O human folk, born to fly upward, why at a breath of wind thus fall ye down?" [3]

In these typical passages we see that Dante takes images common enough in all imaginative poetry, but that he transforms them by placing them *in* the spiritual world. The setting of his world is not our ordinary setting, but lies above it in that of souls. Other poets take us into worlds of fairyland and romance, Dante to the real world of our immortality. Where the beauties of imaginative creation are with most poets the sufficient end, by means of which higher things are only incidentally reflected, with Dante they are the premeditated media, the deliberate instruments, of his higher revelation. He is always turning within, or more truly, his consciousness is so firmly fixed in the spiritual world that what he sees has but the one interest, the one relation. His eyes have the true vision, and he makes us see with him things which in our blindness were invisible before.

As a poet, this faculty gives Dante a right to the highest place; but it still remains to be determined how consciously Dante was a teacher of spiritual things. In other words, how much did Dante know? Was so great a genius a messenger, an agent, of the Lodge? Was he, unconsciously, an initiate; or did he, perhaps, have some personal knowledge of his fellowship and of his high calling?

There is much in his writings which bears on this topic; and though any precise conclusion must in each case rest with the reader's own apprehension of such things, Dante's words and method reveal a certainty of conviction which at least ranks him as a mystic of the highest order, if nothing more. After all, if "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned", it is also true that, "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man".

Before writing the *Divina Commedia,* Dante started, and never finished, a philosophical exposition of certain *canzoni* of his own composition. This book he called *The Banquet,* a title in itself related to the mysteries from Egyptian and Chaldean days, through Greece, to Christianity. The key to much of Dante's meaning lies in this *Convivio,* though commentators have too frequently made the mistake of limiting themselves to the bare statements of his text, while disregarding the whole tenor of his thought, and the more or less obvious undercurrents which were his true purpose and intention.

[3] *Purgatorio,* xii. 88-96.

"Oh blessed those few who sit at the table where the bread of angels is consumed", he writes in the opening chapter, "and wretched they who share the food of sheep! But . . . they who are fed at so lofty a table are not without compassion towards those whom they see browsing round on grass and acorns in the pasture of brutes; and inasmuch as compassion is the mother of benefaction, they who know ever proffer freely of their good wealth to those poor indeed, and are as a living spring at whose waters the natural thirst above spoken of is refreshed."

We shall return to this use of the phrase "bread of angels"; but first, in order to show the full content of Dante's thought, it will be necessary to consider his method of writing. In the first chapter of the second treatise he says that "this exposition must be both literal and allegorical", and that it not only "may be" but "should be expounded chiefly in four senses". The first sense is literal, the second allegorical, which "is a truth hidden under beauteous fiction"; and Dante illustrates this by citing Ovid's account of Orpheus' power of music,[4] which draws not only animals but trees and stones, explaining that this signifies "the *wise man* with the instrument of his voice, maketh cruel hearts tender and humble; and moveth to his will such as have not the life of science and of art." Dante adds to Ovid's account of the appellation "wise man," and there is a suggestive interpretation of just what he means by "a life of science" in the fourteenth chapter, where he shows a series of correspondences between "the heavens" and science. He says that "by heaven I mean science"—using the two together as practically interchangeable, so that by science he implies heaven—"whereto we must needs consider a comparison that holds between the order of the heavens and that of the sciences". It is quite possible that by "the life of science" Dante indicated a life of, or in, heaven.

"The third sense is called moral", he continues; and his illustration further brings forward the traditional secrecy of the initiate. "When Christ ascended the mountain of the transfiguration, of the twelve apostles he took with him but three; wherein the moral may be understood that in the most secret things we should have but few companions."

"The fourth sense is called anagogical, that is to say, 'above the sense'; and this is when a scripture is spiritually expounded which even in the literal sense, *by the very things it signifies, signifies again some portion of the supernal things of eternal glory.*" Dante adds that he will always expound his ode first in the literal sense, and after that in "its allegory, that is its *hidden truth.*" He also says that the allegorical is the "*true* exposition"; and in his dedicatory letter to Can Grande, patron of the arts and Lord of Verona, he applies exactly the same canon of interpretation to the *Divina Commedia,* merely indicating that "although these mystic senses are called by various names, they may all in general be called allegorical, since they differ from the literal or historical." Dante and his predecessors frequently change the order or sequence of these

[4] *Metamorphoses,* x, 139 to 170, and xi, 1 to 18.

types of exposition, interchanging moral and allegorical for instance, but the essential idea remains the same.

In the face of this, the hostility of critics to a "mystical" interpretation of Dante can only be accounted for by their own feeling of helplessness when confronted by a claim to knowledge outside the range of their experience. It is true that the whole mediæval mind, receiving its impulse from the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists, was given to allegorizing, often absurd and extravagant in the extreme; for, as Dr. Jowett says, "they had a method of interpretation which could elicit any meaning out of any words." But nevertheless, the presence of counterfeits, like a shadow, is proof positive of a reality; and there is too much historical and scriptural authority for the evidence of the mysteries, too much kabalistic literature, too many saints, for the fact of their existence to be reasonably disputed.

There is no effort here to show that Dante was connected in any way with some one of the secret organizations,—such as the Rosicrucians, and Templars—to mention the best known—whose reputations, at least, have come down to us to-day. But what is suggested is that Dante knew enough about the spiritual world, its laws and its phenomena, to interpret it into the language of everyday life, and that he uses language and symbols, he selected just those ideas, if you will, from his authorities, which have always been associated directly with the mysteries.

Dante's knowledge, his erudition, was enormous. Dr. Moore devoted hundreds of pages to an analysis of the use of only the strictly classical authors in Dante, which he hoped would "enable students to form a more complete idea than was formerly possible of the encyclopaedic character of Dante's learning and studies, and of the full extent and variety of the literary equipment which enabled him to compose works covering a wider range of subjects than perhaps any other writer, certainly any other very great writer, ever attempted." [5] Now one of the noticeable things about Dante is that he not only used all this erudition to one end and for one purpose, but that he singled out for special emphasis authors noted for their suggestiveness, and for their reference to the other world. Virgil is not only his model and guide through hell and purgatory, but he quotes more from the sixth book, which describes the visit to Hades, than any other. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are full of the Greek mystery traditions; Plato, Aristotle, Statius, Lucan, all make similar contributions; while the Church Fathers, such as Origen, Jerome and Cassian, not to mention Augustine, were all known to St. Thomas Aquinas, and would have been readily accessible to Dante.

Together, therefore, with this contact with the best authors of antiquity, Dante was brought inevitably into touch with a mystical tradition, which in his day had far more standing than it has now. The acceptance, for instance, by all the Latin Fathers and the Schoolmen after them, of the fourfold interpretation of scripture applied by Dante to his own works, and the frequent abuse of it by the ignorant and mis-

[5] *Studies in Dante*, Edmund Moore, Oxford, 1896, First Series, p. 2.

guided amongst them, does not and cannot disprove the validity of such a method. All the mystics, those like a St. Theresa, a St. Catherine of Siena, or a St. Catherine of Genoa, who were in no way associated with any outer organization for the preservation of the mysteries, such as existed in Egypt, Greece and Palestine, nevertheless found it impossible to retail their spiritual experience except in the form of similes, of analogy, of cryptic, and at times almost incomprehensible, language. And where a body of people, conscious on such high planes, have sought a medium of intercommunication, the same symbolical language and the same use of certain physical correspondences have sprung up spontaneously in the most remote parts of the world—India and Peru, Greece and Egypt, Wales and Easter Island. In the widest sense, it is a study of comparative religion; in Dante's case there would seem to be evidence that he not only knew of the traditions and copied their methods by a sort of poetic instinct, but that single-handed he attained such rank in the spiritual world that he understood the language of such initiates as Pythagoras or Plato, let alone St. Paul and the *New Testament* writers, and that he could rightly claim to associate with them in their efforts to benefit mankind. One of the most superb claims ever made by any man is Dante's in the *Inferno,* when he describes his meeting, in the heathen limbo, with the shades of Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan.

> "Thus I saw assembled the goodly school of that lord of highest song, which like an eagle, soars above the rest.
> After they had talked together a space, they turned to me with sign saluting; and my Master smiled thereat.
> And greatly more besides they honoured me; for they made me of their number, so that I was a sixth amid such wisdom." [6]

Again, in the second chapter of the *Convivio,* after Dante points out that he is preparing a banquet, not as one who sits himself "at the blessed table" where "the bread of angels is consumed", but as one who gathers "at the feet of them who sit at meat of that which falls from them", nevertheless adds, "I am moved by the desire to give instruction *which in very truth no other can give.*"

The scriptural authority for a triple, or fourfold, interpretation of Scripture itself is found in *Proverbs* xxii, in the Latin Vulgate, which has direct significance as applying to wisdom. The passage reads in translation, "Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise: and apply thy heart to my doctrine. Behold, I have described it to thee three manner of ways, in thoughts and in knowledge." The distinction between thoughts and knowledge is an interesting one, the Latin word for the latter being *scientia,* the same used by Dante in a passage already quoted, a "life of science".

On these scriptural verses, Origen, the successor and spiritual son of the great Clement of Alexandria, comments at length. Origen was

[6] *Inf.* iv, 94-102. The word *senno* is often translated "intelligences"; but it really means strength of faculty, or wisdom. Note that Dante was *one* of the six, not the sixth or last.

born in 185 A. D., and the *De Principiis* from which we quote, was published before 231. This work was known to St. Thomas Aquinas, and could hardly have escaped Dante's omnivorous reading. It is of some moment, therefore, to find in this passage explicit allusion to the mysteries. After quoting the verses from *Proverbs* above, Origen writes: "Each one, then, ought to describe in his own mind, in a threefold manner, the understanding of the divine letters,—that is, in order that all the more simple individuals may be edified, so to speak, by the very body of Scripture, for such we term that common and historical sense: while if some have commenced to make considerable progress, and are able to see something more, *they* may be edified by the very soul of Scripture. Those again who are perfect, and who resemble those of whom the apostle says, 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, who will be brought to naught; but we speak the wisdom of God [*Theou Sophia*], hidden in a mystery, which God hath decreed before the ages unto our glory,'—all such as these may be edified by the spiritual law itself (which has a shadow of good things to come), as if by the Spirit." Referring to the fact that Clement "who had learned from the Holy Spirit, is commanded to announce, not by letter nor by book, but by the living voice, to the presbyters of the Church of Christ, *i. e.*, to those who possess a mature faculty of wisdom, capable of receiving spiritual teaching"—Origin adds words of great interest: "And by 'men', I now mean souls that are placed in bodies, who, relating those mysteries that are known to them, and revealed through Christ, as if they were a kind of human transactions, or handing down certain legal observances and injunctions, described them figuratively; not that any one who pleased might view these expositions as deserving to be trampled under foot, but that he who should devote himself with all chastity, and sobriety, and watchfulness, to studies of this kind, might be able by this means to trace out the meaning of the Spirit of God, which is perhaps lying profoundly buried, and the context, which may be pointing again in another direction than the ordinary usage of speech would indicate. . . . By an admirable discipline of wisdom, too, the law of truth, even of the prophets, is implanted in the Scriptures of the law, each of which is woven by a divine art of wisdom, as a kind of covering and veil of spiritual truths; and this is what we have called the 'body' of Scripture, so that also, in this way, what we have called the covering of the latter, woven by the art of wisdom, might be capable of edifying and profiting many when others would derive no benefit." [7]

It would seem that, included within the political, scientific, moral, poetic, and theological interests which fill Dante's works, there should also be sought, under "the covering of the letter, woven by a divine art of wisdom", a truly mystical meaning, and that Dante intended, and even directed, that it should be sought.

[7] *De Principiis*, Bk. iv., sections 11 and 14. We have quoted from the Latin text, not the Greek, as the former would have been the one available for Dante.

It is true that, as St. Jerome says, "The art of interpreting the Scriptures is the only one of which all men everywhere claim to be masters. To quote Horace again: 'Taught or untaught we all write poetry.' The chatty old woman, the doting old man, and the wordy sophist one and all take in hand the Scriptures, rend them in pieces, and teach them before they have learned them." But St. Jerome himself follows with a cautious but lengthy indication of the mysteries in the Bible: "Exodus, no doubt, is equally plain, containing as it does merely an account of the ten plagues, the decalogue, and sundry mysterious and divine precepts. The meaning of Leviticus . . . contains the description of Aaron's vestments, and all the regulations connected with the Levites", which "are symbols of heavenly things. The book of Numbers . . . Balaam's prophecy, and the forty-two camping places in the wilderness" are "so many mysteries." [8] So that both Origen and Jerome give patristic authority to the triple interpretation of Scripture, including the mystical. Cassian, a monk of Gallic birth (*c.* 360), who went to Palestine and Egypt, was the first to see the necessity for, and to divide the allegorical interpretation into two—the strictly allegorical and the anagogical, which he defines as follows: "But the anagogical sense rises from spiritual mysteries even to still more sublime and sacred secrets of heaven. . . . For it is one thing to have a ready tongue and elegant language, and quite another to penetrate into the very heart and marrow of heavenly utterances, and to gaze with the pure eye of the soul on profound and hidden mysteries; for this can be gained by no learning of man's, nor condition of this world, only by purity of soul, by means of the illumination of the Holy Ghost." [9]

These passages, quoted from three eminent Church Fathers, were the basis and authority constantly cited by the Schoolmen to justify the fourfold interpretation of Holy Scriptures. Possibly because Neo-Platonic allegorizing became so extravagant, Cassian's fourfold distinction, including the strictly allegorical and the anagogical, or truly mystical, was preferred to the earlier threefold division of Origen. Dante outlines the fourfold, using Cassian's word, anagogical; though, as already quoted, he points out to Can Grande that virtually the two are the same, all genuine allegorizing bordering on the mystical.

The existence of a tradition favouring mystical writing and mystical interpretation being established, it remains to be shown that Dante not only claimed to be himself both such a writer and such an interpreter, but that he used many of the time-honoured symbols, and also in many places expressed himself in language almost identical with that of the mystical writers of all ages. The "bread of angels" is probably one such symbol.

MARION HALE.

[8] Letter liii, sections 7, 8 and also ff.
[9] *The First Conference of Abbot Nestores,* caps. viii and ix.

# HORIZONS

A LETTER has reached me from a friend about a mutual friend, whom I will call X. "Bad news." X. is in difficulties, and the writer of the letter is deeply concerned on his behalf. Will it seem unsympathetic if I tell them both what I really think? Perhaps I could tell Y., the writer of the letter. Perhaps I could say to him that his "bad news" may be read in another light, for it may mean that the whole process is being speeded up as far as X. is concerned, that the high gods are being infinitely kind to him, that with increased pressure there may come increasing light, and that, finally, his entire will may be swung over once and for all to the side of the spiritual world.

But there is a note almost of despair in Y.'s letter. He says: "X. has such a limited horizon that he is totally unable to see. . . . And although he admits the truth of nearly all of this, I have come almost to the point of believing that he will never really be able to see these things as they are."

It interested me enormously, that paragraph, for in it seemed to me to be the key to the whole situation. Y. implies, of course, that any one who is so restricted by the outward surroundings and circumstances of his life, in his opportunities for expansion and "self-expression," to use the present popular term, is thereby immediately and automatically hemmed in as well, in regard to his inner life; that while he may be able to see certain things with his mind, these same fatal and unfortunate restrictions of circumstances are going forever to make it impossible for him to do anything more than think feebly and intermittently about them, to gaze at this "limited horizon" with a sort of despairing longing.

"He has such a limited horizon": what exactly do we mean by the word "horizon"? I suppose that it could be defined in general terms as the line in one's vision where earth and heaven meet. And that line, to the physical eye, will seem near or far away, depending upon the light, the atmosphere, the configuration of the landscape. But in any event the view that one is going to get of the horizon must depend upon one's vision. If one looks clear-eyed, far-sightedly, one sees the outline clear-cut; one sees, too, the detail of all the intervening country, the up-sweep of the hills to the horizon's line, all the tangle and undergrowth and shadows of the valleys where the hills begin. But if one is physically near-sighted there is only, and at all times, a confused blur. At best, in certain lights, one may get passing glimpses of things slightly more remote. But for one so physically unfortunate there must be, in spite of straining and effort, a range outside the limit of vision for ever impossible as long as the disability persists.

Surely the parallel is clear. For when the eyes of the soul are near-sighted and blurred, when the man himself is self-centred and selfish,

when as a result he is constantly thinking in terms of the material, and of how things will affect him personally for good or for ill, then the soul's horizon, too, must be contracted and hemmed in. Such a man, missing utterly the presence of unselfish or heroic motive in the lives of others, must miss, too, the beauty of the lights and shadows and colours in his life's landscape. He sees, in the drab and gray atmosphere of his own chief motive and interest, not vistas of gladness and sunshine, far-stretched to the horizon where earth reaches up to heaven in aspiration and yearning, where heaven's blue comes down into and touches earth in blessing, but only a cloudy and lowering sky-line without promise and without form, the threatening of a storm always about to break upon him. And not only is his outlook upon his life's uttermost limit of possibility restricted and blurred, but he misses, too, the perspective of all those things which go to make up the more immediate surroundings of his soul. They, too, are indistinct, unrelated. Now and then, in a moment of unselfishness, one or other of them may appear for a time relatively clear against the darkness of its background. But for the near-sighted eyes of such a soul it will be too great an effort and a strain to hold it for long in this proper perspective, and the vision must fade again.

But when the eyes of the soul see clearly, when the Vision is clear and strong, when Love and not self fills the heart, the horizon changes and broadens, the man himself is alive to the significance of that which he sees. His light is that light which lighteth every man and illumines him who desires illumination; his atmosphere, in which he finds all things clearly outlined and defined, is the spirit in which he performs his duties. He recognizes as part of the configuration of his landscape, the immediate surroundings and practical circumstances of his life; but he sees them not as bounds or as limits, but as opportunities; not as barriers, but as endless possibilities. He rejoices in the sunshine and glory and uplift of the hills, but he rejoices still more in that tangle and undergrowth of the valleys, for he recognizes that there, in the shadows, are those problems and sorrows which make for life's fullness and fruition; he knows, if they are used aright, and are not allowed to use him, that therein is the Father glorified.

And he sees, too, in the proper and right perspective: the inter-relation of objects is plain. Now in the light of his motive of selflessness and of service, in his effort to do all things for his Master and for love of Him, he sees that all duties are inter-related and part of a great plan, that each least duty is consecrated and holy and so a joy to perform. And he knows, too, that no action is unimportant, that no duty is so trivial as to be without spiritual significance. Now he comes to see that the Master whom he loves and serves can take for His own, and can use in His greater work, the spiritual force generated by that consecrated motive and effort. And he sees that the help for the world that can be so given will —must—depend upon his own faithfulness and perseverance, upon his own courage and energy, upon his continuing effort, upon his holding

always the view of his life's horizon and landscape in that right perspective.

X. is so self-centred now as to be astigmatic; his horizon is limited by his vision, and by the atmosphere which he himself is helping to create. But once let in that Light, and all will be changed. Once substitute love for self-love, service of others for concentration upon self, and those restricted boundaries will vanish; all limits for the future will be removed.

"Not easy," it may be said. But X. already "admits the truth of nearly all" of these things upon which I have touched now, and of which Y. and I have talked together so often. He already feels his disability sufficiently keenly to be discontented about it. He must make a beginning, by a conscious effort of will; he must pray for strength and perseverance, and trust that these will come. Perhaps it will not be easy. But Y. might be able gradually to help him to more and more concentrated effort, to greater inner quiet. And Y. will be able, too, to help him with practical suggestions; to remind him that useless and unnecessary talk dissipates energy; that if he reads a worthless book he not only fills his mind with its worthless contents, but that he wastes time which might have been spent in quite another kind of reading, with the resulting benefits. And with the deeper peace, with the always improving motive, the desire on his part will be ever greater.

Only let him make a beginning and he will see better, little by little, where earth and heaven meet, the line clear and distinct at times and the horizon defined beyond peradventure, at others seemingly blended because of the glory of tender light suffusing all. And that light will reach first those darkest places farthest removed from the horizon itself, as a winter's sunrise penetrates first with a rosy glow the recesses of the woods and the cold hollows in the hills, before the sun itself beats down upon the world. He will see, too, and more and more often as he tries to see, the Cross outlined against his horizon's sky, as one sees it so often on the hilltops of France. As there, he will see it now dark and clear and steadfast against life's sunset sky, now radiant and glorious with promise in the beauty of an always resurrected day, of a new opportunity. But he must *search* his horizon. If he only glances up occasionally, he will miss it. He must look, and keep on looking. . . .

Yet perhaps, before I write all this to Y., it would be wise to reinforce the written word with a week of intense practice. I want so much to help them. Can I afford to preach until I have more perfectly performed?

STUART DUDLEY.

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*He that has never known adversity is but half acquainted with himself.*—CALTON.

# CONSCIOUSNESS AND HABIT

THEOSOPHY has been summarized as "intellectually an attitude, practically a method, ethically a spirit, and religiously a life." More than any other modern philosopher, Henri Bergson has grasped and utilized the first two elements of this theosophic quarternary, so that the technique of his work is of scarcely less interest to readers of the QUARTERLY than is the striking theosophic character of many of his conclusions. In his most recent volume of lectures and essays, *L'Énergie spirituelle,* published in English a few months ago, under the less attractive title of *Mind-Energy,* we have a discussion of the fundamental problems of the relation of life and consciousness, mind and matter, body and soul, dreams, memory, phantoms, and the significance of intellectual effort, whose study will repay our time and effort, and which may serve to continue and to supplement the line of thought pursued in our consideration of Dr. M'Taggart's work on *Human Immortality and Pre-existence.*

Let us look first to the attitude and method which Bergson adopts in his search for a solution of the fundamental problems of life, and to which he gives us the key in the opening pages of the book.

"Whence are we? What are we? Whither tend we? These are the vital questions which immediately present themselves when we give ourselves up to philosophical reflexion without regard to philosophical systems. But between us and these problems, systematic philosophy interposes other problems. 'Before seeking the solution of a problem,' it says, 'must we not first know how to seek it? Study the mechanism of thinking, then discuss the nature of knowledge and criticize the faculty of criticizing: when you have assured yourself of the value of the instrument, you will know how to use it.' That moment, alas! will never come. I see only one means of knowing how far I can go: that is by going. If the knowledge we are in search of be real instruction, a knowledge which expands thought, then to analyse the mechanism of thought before seeking knowledge could only show the impossibility of ever getting it, since we should be studying thought before the expansion of it, which it is the business of knowledge to obtain. A premature reflexion of the mind on itself would discourage it from advancing, whilst by simply advancing it would have come nearer to its goal and perceived, moreover, that the so-called obstacles were for the most part the effects of a mirage. . . . How much better a more modest philosophy would be, one which would go straight to its object without worrying about the principles on which it depends! It would not aim at immediate certainty, which can only be ephemeral. It would take its time. It would be a gradual ascent to the light. Borne along in an experience growing

ever wider and wider, rising to ever higher and higher probabilities, it would strive toward final certainty as to a limit.

"I hold, for my part, that there is no principle from which the solution of the great problems can be mathematically deduced. Moreover, I am unable to discover any decisive fact which clinches the matter, such as we expect to find in physics and chemistry. But it seems to me that in different regions of experience there are different groups of facts, each of which, without giving us the desired knowledge, points out to us the direction in which we may find it. Now to have only a direction is something. And it is still more to have several, for these directions will naturally converge towards one and the same point, and it is that point we are seeking. In short, we possess even now a certain number of *lines of facts,* which do not go as far as we want, but which we can prolong hypothetically. I wish to follow out some of these with you. Each, taken apart, will lead us only to a conclusion which is simply probable; but taking them all together, they will, by their convergence, bring before us such an accumulation of probabilities that we shall feel on the road to certitude. Moreover we shall come nearer and nearer to it through the joint effort of philosophers who will become partners. For, in this view, philosophy is no longer a construction, the systematic work of a single thinker. It needs, and unceasingly calls for, corrections and re-touches. It progresses like positive science. Like it, too, it is a work of collaboration." (pp. 4-7.)

These two paragraphs restate for us the theosophic attitude and method. Truth cannot be cabined in a phrase, or reality cramped into a formula. Each is larger than that in which we strive to contain it. Knowledge exists and is obtainable. But certainty can come only with experience. Truth is a goal toward which we must grow—the limit of an infinite sequence. But in advance of the ultimate union that alone gives certainty, the truth is pointed to by many converging lines of partial experience, each lit by a different facet of truth, yet in their totality indicating a symmetry and wholeness greater than we could predicate from any single point of view. Thus we can supplement our own vision by the vision of our fellows, and reinforce the evidence gained from one line of inquiry by that drawn from others. This is the familiar method that The Theosophical Society has practised for the forty-five years of its existence.

We can, perhaps, best illustrate Bergson's use of this method, and lead our readers to turn to the book itself, by quoting at some length from the first lecture, on "Life and Consciousness"; and we may hope, also, to draw from these passages a view of the relation of mind and matter which will make it apparent that the death of the body, so far from destroying consciousness, should but liberate and enlarge it.

"The first line or direction which I invite you to follow is this. When we speak of mind we mean, above everything else, consciousness. What is consciousness? There is no need to define so familiar a thing, some-

thing which is continually present in everyone's experience. I will not give a definition, for that would be less clear than the thing itself; I will characterize consciousness by its most obvious feature: it means, before everything else, memory. Memory may lack amplitude; it may embrace but a feeble part of the past; it may retain only what is just happening; but memory is there, or there is no consciousness. . . .

"But all consciousness is also anticipation of the future. Consider the direction of your mind at any moment you like to choose; you will find that it is occupied with what now is, but always and especially with regard to what is about to be. Attention is expectation, and there is no consciousness without a certain attention to life. The future is there; it calls us, or rather it draws us to it; its uninterrupted traction makes us advance along the route of time and requires us also to be continually acting. All action is an encroachment on the future.

"To retain what no longer is, to anticipate what as yet is not,—these are the primary functions of consciousness. . . . Consciousness is then, as it were, the hyphen which joins what has been to what will be, the bridge which spans the past and the future. But what purpose does the bridge serve? What is consciousness called on to do?

"In order to reply to the question, let us inquire what beings are conscious and how far in nature the domain of consciousness extends. But let us not insist that the evidence shall be complete, precise and mathematical; if we do we shall get nothing. To know with scientific certainty that a particular being is conscious, we should have to enter into it, coincide with it, be it. It is literally impossible for you to prove, either by experience or by reasoning, that I, who am speaking to you at this moment, am a conscious being. I may be an ingeniously constructed natural automaton. . . . Yet you will agree that though it is not impossible that I am an unconscious automaton, it is very improbable."

Just as we should be entirely mistaken if we assumed that because in ourselves digestion was directly connected with a stomach, therefore only beings with stomachs could digest, so, "in like manner, consciousness in man is unquestionably connected with the brain, but it by no means follows that a brain is indispensable to consciousness. . . . Theoretically, then, everything living might be conscious. *In principle,* consciousness is co-extensive with life. Now is it so *in fact?* Does not consciousness, occasionally, fall asleep or slumber? This is probable, and here is a second line of facts which leads to this conclusion.

"In the living being which we know best, it is by means of the brain that consciousness works. Let us then cast a glance at the human brain and see how it functions. The brain is part of a nervous system which includes, together with the brain proper, the spinal cord, the nerves, etc. In the spinal cord there are mechanisms set up, each of which contains, ready to start, a definite complicated action which the body can carry out at will, just as the rolls of perforated paper which are used in the pianola mark out beforehand the tunes which the instru-

ment will play. Each of these mechanisms can be set working directly by an external cause: the body, then, at once responds to the stimulus received by executing a number of intercoordinated movements. But in some cases the stimulus, instead of obtaining immediately a more or less complicated reaction from the body by addressing itself directly to the spinal cord, mounts first to the brain, then redescends and calls the mechanism of the spinal cord into play after having made the brain intervene. Why is this indirect path taken? What purpose is served by the intervention of the brain? We may easily guess, if we consider the general structure of the nervous system. The brain is in a general relation to all the mechanisms in the spinal cord and not only to some particular one among them; also it receives every kind of stimulus, not only certain special kinds. It is therefore a crossway, where the nervous impulse arriving by any sensory path can be directed into any motor path. Or, if you prefer, it is a commutator, which allows the current received from one point of the organism to be switched in the direction of any motor contrivance. When the stimulus, then, instead of following the direct path, goes off to the brain, it is evidently in order that it may set in action a motor mechanism which has been chosen, instead of one which is automatic. The spinal cord contains a great number of ready-formed responses to the question which the circumstances address to it; the intervention of the brain secures that the most appropriate among them shall be given. The brain is an organ of choice."

As we descend in the scale of the animal series we can see this faculty of choosing still present but less and less pronounced, till automatism and choice seem fused into one. "The reaction is now so simple that it appears almost mechanical; it still hesitates and gropes, however, as though it would be voluntary. . . . This, then, is what we find along the second line of facts. It reinforces the conclusion we had come to before: for if, as we said, consciousness retains the past and anticipates the future, it is probably because it is called on to make a choice. In order to choose, we must know what we can do and remember the consequences, advantageous or injurious, of what we have already done; we must foresee and we must remember. And now we are going to see that our first conclusion, reinforced by this new line of facts, supplies an intelligible answer to the question before us: are all living beings conscious or does consciousness cover a part only of the domain of life? . . . It appears to me therefore extremely likely that consciousness, originally immanent in all that lives, is dormant where there is no longer spontaneous movement, and awakens when life tends to free activity. We can verify the law in ourselves. What happens when one of our actions ceases to be spontaneous and becomes automatic? Consciousness departs from it. In learning an exercise, for example, we begin by being conscious of each of the movements we execute. Why? Because we originate the action, because it is the result of a decision and implies a choice. Then gradually, as the movements become more and more linked

together and more and more determine one another mechanically, dispensing us from the need of choosing and deciding, the consciousness of them diminishes and disappears. On the other hand, when is it that our consciousness attains its greatest liveliness? Is it not at those moments of inward crisis when we hesitate between two, or it may be several, different courses to take, when we feel that our future will be what we make it? The variations in the intensity of our consciousness seem then to correspond to the more or less considerable sum of choice, or, as I would say, to the amount of creation, which our conduct requires. Everything leads us to believe that it is thus with consciousness in general. If consciousness means memory and anticipation, it is because consciousness is synonymous with choice."

Looking thus to the movement of life within ourselves, where it is most brightly lit for us and most easily traceable, we see it marked by two contrasting tendencies and following two divergent paths. The first path is that of free will, of conscious choice and purpose, meeting the environment about us in a way which we choose anew with each action. This is the path of constant creation; for to each event and circumstance we add something that was not there before,—an element of our own free will, the way we *choose* to deal with it, and this element of ourselves which we put into it makes it other than it was before. Also, it makes us other than we were before; for we have chosen to draw, from the infinite reservoir of our potential being, a definite element to make actual and manifest; and as this continues in choice after choice, the self is created by the self, and the tide of conscious life and volition increases in depth and intensity by each new act of will.

But the second tendency is no less clearly observable in our proneness to deal with similar events in similar ways—so that when we have once chosen and acted in response to any group of stimuli or circumstances, their recurrence finds us predisposed to repeat the same reaction. This is the path of habit, in which the free and conscious choice which we originally brought to bear upon events, progressively gives way to an automatic repetition of the past; and our *action,* which was at first free and purposed, becomes the mere mechanical *reaction* from an external stimulus. Here consciousness ceases to function, and, ceasing to function, withdraws.

Bergson suggests that these two tendencies, which we see opposed, yet coexisting and reconciled in our own nature, give us the key to the universal relation of mind and body, consciousness and matter.

"Let us then," he says, "imagine living matter in its elementary form, such as it may have been when it first appeared: a simple mass of protoplasmic jelly like the amœba, which can undergo change of form at will, and is therefore vaguely conscious. Now, for it to grow and evolve, there are two ways open. It may take the path toward movement and action,—movement growing ever more effective, action growing

freer and freer. The path toward movement involves risk and adventure, but also it involves consciousness with its growing degrees of intensity and depth. It may take the other path, it may abandon the faculty of acting and choosing, the potentiality of which it carries within it, may accommodate itself to obtain from the spot where it is all it requires for its support, instead of going abroad to seek it. Existence is then assured to it, a tranquil, unenterprising existence, but this existence is also torpor, the first effect of immobility: the torpor soon becomes fixed; this is unconsciousness. These are the two paths which lie open before the evolution of life. Living matter finds itself committed partly to the one path, partly to the other. Speaking generally, the first path may be said to mark the direction of the animal world (we have to qualify it, because many animal species renounce movement and with it probably consciousness also); the second may be said to mark the direction of the vegetable world (again it has to be qualified, for mobility, and therefore probably consciousness also, may occasionally be awakened in plants).

"When, now, we reflect on this bias or tendency of life at its entry into the world, we see it bringing something which encroaches on inert matter. The world left to itself obeys fatalistic laws. In determinate conditions matter behaves in a determinate way. Nothing it does is unforeseeable. Were our science complete and our calculating power infinite, we should be able to predict everything which will come to pass in the inorganic material universe, in its mass and in its elements, as we predict an eclipse of the sun or moon. Matter is inertia, geometry, necessity. But with life there appears free, predictable [unpredictable?], movement. The living being chooses or tends to choose. Its role is to create. In a world where everything else is determined, a zone of indetermination surrounds it. To create the future requires preparatory action in the present, to prepare what will be is to utilize what has been: life therefore is employed from its start in conserving the past and anticipating the future in a duration in which past, present and future tread one on another, forming an indivisible continuity. Such memory, such anticipation, are consciousness itself. This is why, in right if not in fact, consciousness is co-extensive with life."

Let us turn here for a moment from Bergson's pages to follow further, and for ourselves, some of the thoughts to which they give rise. And first of this inert matter, which is "geometry, necessity," reacting in unchanging, determinate ways to determinate conditions,—does it not now appear as but the forms into which past conscious life has crystallized, having surrendered itself wholly to habit? We see it as the skandhas of a past manvantara, the sediment left from innumerable distillations of consciousness through an infinite sequence of repeated acts. Is this vision purely fanciful? Is it absurd to think that we may see, in the various properties of matter, the types of habit into which conscious life tends to pass when choice and volition are surrendered?

We have no answer, yet imagination plays upon the theme. Here is the solid impenetrable rock, the condensed "no" which consciousness has said to the pressure put upon it, until resistance has become the law of its being; here, too, the facile acquiescence of the fluid, taking whatever mould and shape it finds around it, till it has none of its own; and locked within them all, in each and every form that matter has, are the tremendous energies that have been compressed and rendered latent there by the endlessly repeated thrust in one direction of what was first a conscious will. The material universe is presented to us as but the fixed habits of being, where life acts automatically, and consciousness is dormant through lack of volition.

But what is of far more moment to us than such abstract speculations upon the universe as a whole, is the light which we may find to throw upon our own life as conscious beings. To Bergson the very essence of consciousness is choice, volition, free, creative will. Where these exist and grow, consciousness exists and grows. Where they are surrendered, consciousness withdraws; and we have seen that this surrender occurs whenever we act from habit rather than from will.

If we turn to the dictionary we shall find the word "habit" to be derived from the Latin *habitus,* "condition, state, appearance, dress, attire," and that it is defined, first, as "a usual or characteristic state or condition," and second, as "a usual or customary mode of action, particularly a mode of action so established by use as to be entirely natural, involuntary, instinctive, unconscious, uncontrollable, etc." The suggestion is, therefore, inherent in the word itself, that our customary mode of action forms the dress or attire of the self, and that in the "involuntary, instinctive and unconscious" action of habit we find all the properties of a material body. We are thus led to consider the vesture or body of the self, on each plane of being from the most subtile to the most physical, as woven by the self from its own past choice and acts.

In this view, so far from consciousness being a product of its body, the body is but a product of consciousness; and instead of consciousness being dependent upon the activities of the body, these activities represent with precision the region in which consciousness is limited, surrendered or withdrawn, and where the free choice and will of the self have been replaced by the mechanical reactions of habit, or of habit crystallized into substance. Death, then, can no longer appear to us as the destroyer, but as the liberator; freeing us from the body that limited our consciousness and confined our power of will and choice, it restores to consciousness its pristine freedom and completeness. As we look out upon physical life and death, in the light of this new concept of the nature and relations of consciousness and matter, we see how simple and inevitable is the truth of many mystic sayings that before were dark and contradictory. Quite literally and obviously, "in the midst of life we are in death," caught in the snare of matter, held fast in habit, and only as

"we die daily," abandoning each form as we create it, do we keep the freedom which is the life and essence of consciousness.

It is now no longer Bergson, but the age-old teaching of the saints and seers and mystics which holds and guides our thought. The theosophic attitude and method have played their part and led us to the gates which open only to its ethical spirit and religious life. Yet by what Bergson has shown us we may interpret more clearly the messages that come back to us from those that have passed through—who speak with the surety of personal knowledge and experience, but in terms which are too often foreign to our untrained understanding.

What is it that they tell us? They waste no time in arguing whether the soul is mortal or immortal, whether consciousness survives or perishes with the body. They know; there is no question here. What concerns them, what they strive with passionate earnestness to make clear to all who will listen to them, is that immortal life can be entered from where we stand; that we do not need to wait for death to set us free, but may claim the freedom of the soul even here and now; that the chains of the body can be loosened, even as a habit can be discarded and cast aside. And the way is simple. We have but to claim and use again our power of volition; to meet each event, each circumstance, not with the automatic, mechanical reaction of old habit, but with a new and purposeful act of choice, determining our course by the will of the soul, not by the inertia of our past.

What does it mean when we are told that we must become as little children—and that of such is the kingdom of heaven? There are many meanings; but one stands out sharply in the light of our present thought. To the child all things are new; and each new event is met by a new creative act of will. Therefore the child grows apace in life, and his consciousness broadens and deepens year by year, almost moment by moment. Growth ceases only where habit begins; and the secret of immortal youth is in the constant pressing forward that rests in no achievement, however great, ever striving toward something higher, always willing something better, never content merely to remain on the level that has been reached. "Recollection and Detachment"—magical acts that open for us the portals of immortal life; for where they are practised no habit can endure, save only the habit that they themselves constitute: the habit of growth, the habit of freedom and will; the body of the resurrection, donned while yet we live. "Dying daily," death is needless. At its touch the physical drops away; but nothing of the self remains imprisoned in it, caught in the circle of necessity, which habit constitutes.

But let us return again to Bergson. Perhaps he does not speak with the authority of the theosophic life; yet freedom of the intellect is won by the same process that gains the freedom of the soul, and Bergson's intellect is preeminently free. Here he speaks of what he knows—

though his knowledge be confined to a single plane, so that even his most creative and stimulating work seems thin in comparison with the simple records of the saints, whose lives were whole. But few people understand the records of the saints, and some, who do not, may perhaps understand Bergson. Let us consider therefore his description of how life may go about the conquest of matter, realizing that it is our own problem, if we would follow where the saints and seers have led.

"Consciousness and matter appear to us, then, as radically different forms of existence, even as antagonistic forms, which have to find a *modus vivendi*. Matter is necessity, consciousness is freedom; but though diametrically opposed to one another, life has found the way of reconciling them. This is precisely what life is,—freedom inserting itself within necessity, turning it to its profit. Life would be an impossibility were the determinism of matter so absolute as to admit no relaxation. Suppose, however, that at particular moments and at particular points matter shows a certain elasticity, then and there will be the opportunity for consciousness to install itself. It will have to humble itself at first; yet, once installed, it will dilate; it will spread from its point of entry and not rest till it has conquered the whole, for time is at its disposal, and the slightest quantity of indetermination, by continually adding to itself, will make up as much freedom as you like."

We may read this as a description of the entrance of consciousness into matter at the dawn of the manvantara, or as a commentary upon the descent of the Manasaputras into the earth-born bodies prepared for them, but it is of far more interest and moment to us to apply it to our present position, where we have awakened to aspiration and desire for the things of the inner life, but are faced by formed habits which automatically determine the character of our thoughts and actions even against our will. As Bergson points out, were this determination indeed absolute, our case would be hopeless. But it never is complete. Always there is some point of elasticity, some measure of freedom of choice. There we may set our aspiration and good resolution to work. It is, indeed, at first a very humbling process. The Lord of Heaven is born into the world as a helpless infant, needing to be ceaselessly tended, regularly nourished. We aspire to discipleship, to know and serve the Masters of Wisdom, to win the secrets of immortal life, and we find that we cannot even control our resentment when our vanity is pricked, keep our hands away from our face, or cease from mispronouncing a word. These are as yet too great tasks for us; in those directions we are still too bound by habit; and we must begin where habit is less compelling and our freedom greater. Perhaps the most we can do is to resolve to suppress our resentment, even if we must feel it; and we bend our energies to keeping silent under provocation. It is a pitiably small thing in the light of our great ambition, and it is still more humiliating when we fail in it time after time. But each conquest loosens the whole hold

of habit on our conscious life, and from such a point of entry our will may work, growing daily stronger, and little by little extending the scope of its effort, till it is able to uncover and attack the central citadel of self-love from which the evil comes. Once that citadel falls, and the *habit* of self-reference and self-love is broken, we know a measure of freedom that makes us other than we were. We recognize that we have found the Path and the power to move, however slowly and haltingly, along it.

We cannot, in the scope of this article, follow Bergson even through the first lecture—the opening chapter of the book—which we have taken as the text for our discussion. It is true that we have turned from it to follow at greater length our own thought, which it prompted. But that is the way in which such writings as Bergson's must be read. Their value lies not only in the author's thought, but even more in their power to inspire and stimulate the thought of the reader. We pay them no higher compliment than when they rest forgotten in our hands, while our mind pursues its own search for truth along the avenues they opened out to us. We have said enough to show what may be expected from the book itself, and something of the bearing of some of its conclusions upon the question of immortality and the survival of the personality after physical death. But we cannot resist adding two further quotations: the one, to correct any impression that because Bergson's own achievement appears to have been primarily intellectual, he is indifferent to the higher claims of the moral life (and let us not forget that Bergson has probably done more than any other modern thinker to restore to philosophy a just emphasis on the will, and to show that it is the application of wisdom, not merely knowledge, which philosophy should give us); and the second, to contrast Bergson's view of memory with that of Dr. M'Taggart, which we considered in a previous paper, and to show the agreement of their conclusion as to the survival of consciousness after physical death.

"The standpoint of the moralist is higher. In man alone, especially among the best of mankind, the vital movement pursues its way without hindrance, thrusting through that work of art, the human body, which it has created on its way, the creative current of the moral life. Man, called on at every moment to lean on the totality of his past in order to bring his weight to bear more effectively on the future, is the great success of life. But it is the moral man who is a creator in the highest degree,—the man whose action, itself intense, is also capable of intensifying the action of other men, and, itself generous, can kindle fires on the hearths of generosity. The men of moral grandeur, particularly those whose inventive and simple heroism has opened new paths to virtue, are revealers of metaphysical truth. Although they are the culminating point of evolution, they are nearest the source and they enable us to perceive the impulsion which comes from the deep. It is in studying these great lives, *in striving to experience sympathetically what they*

*experience* [italics ours], that we may penetrate by an act of intuition to the life principle itself. To pierce the mystery of the deep, it is sometimes necessary to regard the heights. It is earth's hidden fire which appears at the summit of the volcano."

* * * * *

"I believe that our whole psychical existence is something just like this single sentence [which though spoken word by word must be held as a unit present to the mind, or the thread of meaning would be lost], continued since the first awakening of consciousness, interspersed with commas, but never broken by full stops. And consequently I believe that our whole past still exists. It exists subconsciously, by which I mean that it is present to consciousness in such a manner that, to have the revelation of it, consciousness has no need to go out of itself or seek for foreign assistance; it has but to remove an obstacle, to withdraw a veil, in order that all that it contains, all in fact that it actually is, may be revealed. Fortunate are we to have this obstacle, infinitely precious to us is the veil! The brain is what secures to us this advantage. It keeps our attention fixed on life; and life looks forward; it looks back only in the degree to which the past can aid it to illumine and prepare the future. To live is, for the mind, essentially to concentrate itself on the action to be accomplished. To live is to be inserted in things by means of a mechanism which draws from consciousness all that is utilizable in action, all that can be acted on the stage, and darkens the greater part of the rest. Such is the brain's part in the work of memory: it does not serve to preserve the past, but primarily to mask it, then to allow only what is practically useful to emerge through the mask. Such, too, is the part the brain plays in regard to the mind generally. Extracting from the mind what is externalizable in movement, inserting the mind into this motor frame, it causes it to limit its vision, but also it makes its action efficacious. This means that the mind overflows the brain on all sides, and that cerebral activity responds only to a very small part of mental activity.

"But this also means that mental life cannot be an effect of bodily life, that it looks much more as if the body were simply made use of by the mind, and that we have, therefore, no reason to suppose the body and the mind united inseparably to one another. . . . But if, as I have tried to show, the mental life overflows the cerebral life, if the brain does but translate into movements a small part of what takes place in consciousness, then survival becomes so probable that the onus of proof falls on him who denies it rather than on him who affirms it; for the only reason we can have for believing in the extinction of consciousness at death is that we see the body become disorganized, that this is a fact of experience, and the reason loses its force if the independence of almost the whole of consciousness with regard to the body has been shown to be also a fact of experience."

HENRY BEDINGER MITCHELL.

# WHAT WE ALL KNOW

WHY talk about what we all know? Simply because it is of the utmost practical importance to us. It is far more important than either the things we are keenly interested in finding out, or those in the next further layer which we have not yet glimpsed,—and so should hail as wholly new discoveries. We might as well admit the facts—exploration appeals to most of us, especially when it can be done at second hand, following someone else's account of discoveries. Conquest is another matter. It does not awaken the same appeal. The very word makes one begin to feel uncomfortable —it has such an angular aspect. Perhaps this is one reason why what we know lacks interest for us. The next step is so evidently along the conquest route. We prefer rather to garner more information. Lean and hungry cooks, surrounded with all the materials for producing nourishing food, lacking only the will to compound and bake them: that is one picture of a condition we should be able to recognize as very like our own. You can see, with a little imagination, that ill-nourished cook-person running around the garden, looking for new flavours to use, new vegetables to add a final dash of excellence to the pot, but never putting the pot over the fire;—not quite ready to do the one thing needed, which is to use what is at hand.

### Words as Screens

In case the structure of modern civilization should, as some are anticipating, be shaken over, and fall into ruins,—there will be in it one gain for the disciple of the next generation. There will be great simplification. Now, we have so many words, so much machinery of life behind which to hide; we so seldom face facts as they are, even when we are alone with ourselves! Something or somebody (for these elementals are very personal), in the congeries we call "self", gets uncomfortable, and tries to turn the conversation that is going on within us, as soon as we begin to deal with fact. Usually it succeeds; and the result is that when we look things over with anyone else, honesty of thought and expression are so rare that memory readily holds the record of all those fruitful occasions. The other extreme, to which we sometimes react, is surely equally stupid. We say, Let us face the facts;—and grimly begin to burrow, like rodents. For the moment, we pretend to believe that only the mud and grime and rubble in our natures are *real;* we face them as our realities and have a bad half-hour. Then common sense comes to our rescue, we clutch its hand to pull us up out of the mire,—and quickly drop it and run off, to find some way of forgetting what we saw. It would be far wiser to stand by, and to get the rest of the picture. Often we get that more clearly by watching others.

### Friends as Sign-posts

A sympathetic observation of the struggles of a fellow-student may reveal much. Even the attempt is illuminating. Do we hesitate to try? Do we say, "Oh, I never know what things mean?" There is a clue;—*why* this unwillingness to make the effort?

I have one friend who would answer:—"That is such a slow process. My conclusions would be sure to be wrong. Then by the time I had discovered where they were wrong and tried another interpretation,—so much time would be lost. I should never get anywhere." This friend is always looking for "short-cuts". Let a new angle of an accepted truth be presented, and it is by this person eagerly received as a probable short-cut to the acquirement of some quality that is now being painfully striven after. Eternity, on this friend's map, would appear to be checkered with short-cuts, known to and carefully concealed by the elect;—effortless approaches to the heights of heaven, the exhilaration of the altitude without the struggle of the climb. Surely those are ways imagined only by the valley-folk, who have not yet dared the steeps, known to them only by sight, and so not known at all. It could not be thus that Masters reached their commanding position, nor with such ideals that they attempt new conquests, always fresh dangers. My friend's eagerness for a deceptive ease of attainment ought not to annoy me, as it too often does. It stands out bold and clear, at that particular fork of the road like a warning sign-post. It tells me how foolish I am when I turn away from the effort and sustained determination which right self-identification often require. Is one annoyed with the man who nailed up the sign warning of a dangerous quicksand at the side of the road?

Another friend to whom I am much indebted gets stalled at a different spot. It amuses me to liken it to the problem of the boy whose voice is "changing";—that boy may start a salutation in his nice new deep voice, and find it ending in an embarrassingly shrill pipe. It happens that my changing-voice friend has been making a special study of obedience, as one of the great virtues exemplified in the lives of seers and saints, great and little. There is a genuine admiration for the fruits of obedience, and a real desire to travel by that road. Indeed much ground there has been covered, but beware of any sudden demand! Let conscience, or some natural authority on the outside, give a quick word of command—and, squeak, squeak goes the childish protest. This usually is voiced in the form of a determination to be obedient even to the point of martyrdom; *only* this, and *only* that, and as many more *onlys* as there is space for before the tear drops begin to splash. Yet, constantly as this little drama is repeated, my friend does not yet see in it the part played by self-will; does not even suspect that none could give command to one who has not yet been broken to the obediences of conscience and daily custom. It is clear to the onlooker that an obedient heart, a wholly obedient heart, would find no problem, no obstacle in the various situations

which to this friend of mine are so cruelly complex and make plain obedience seem so impossible. Instead of wondering why she "acts up" so foolishly, let me be grateful for another sign post, in the labyrinth of our common human nature. This one says, Make sure you are eager to obey before you count the obstacles.

### Real Needs

What do we really need? Looking within my own heart, or recalling the registered demands made by others,—the answer is the same. We all have teaching enough. Any one, out of dozens of the books we have, gives that. They but repeat the truths given out, now from one angle and then from another; show them flat, or in relief. They are like the maps printed by the railroads,—the territory covered by the road is shown with all the intersecting lines that cross it; but broad and clear, as though nature's own chosen route, stands out the line of the company that prints the map. One sees it as the best possible way to travel. So each of our books points out one or more best ways. The desire, however, is not so much to induce travelling by that route alone. What the wise ones most desire is to awaken the will to set forth, the desire to adventure on any charted route. Yes, we have knowledge enough.

We are rich, too, in examples. Take the simple, unassuming life of Mr. Judge, with the light thrown upon it by his *Letters,* Volumes I and II. We have there sufficient applied wisdom to meet every need. Sometimes I have been tempted to rearrange those two books, with scissors and paste pot, on the plan of the old fashioned health guide, called the Family Doctor, or some such title. That tells you:—"If feverish, stop eating; drink a gallon of water; take a big dose of herb-tea, and sleep twelve hours." In equally simple fashion, but with far greater discrimination, Mr. Judge prescribes for the soul's disorders, particularly those due to the over-feeding of Lower Manas, and to failure to give the will the constant exercise that makes it a supple, responsive instrument. Our only need, it seems to me, is there,—the need of more will, more desire. But, after all, that is equivalent to saying that all a house-carpenter needs is a completed house. Building houses is his trade—building will and desire might be called the trade of the disciple;—neither builds for his own use. He builds that there may be more of his commodity for use in the world.

### Three Wishes

Suppose you were offered three wishes, as in one of the oldest type of fairytale. For what would you wish first? This is not so simple as it sounds. The situation is one common to the fairylore of many peoples, written in many languages. Suddenly appears the fairy magician; as quickly the three wishes are made;—and the fortunate one is soon rubbing his eyes, for he finds that with three fair chances to get anything he wished, it is all over, and he has nothing at all. Unlimited

as the offer was, he was never left healthy, wealthy and wise. One of the oldest versions of this particular story is that in which the gift-fairy made her offer to a poor old husband and wife. The wife put in the first word:—"I wish", she cried, "that I might always have all the porridge I could eat." Annoyed at such trifling with their great opportunity, the husband said, as the porridge pots began to run over,—"I wish you had a bag of it on the end of your nose!" He had meant only to reprove, but he had used the fateful words "I wish", and instantly there appeared the pudding bag firmly attached to her nose. There was then no choice, the third and last wish had to be used to free the wife from that unsightly ornament. The fairy vanished, and they faced one another, no whit better off than they were before all the treasures of the Earth had three times been laid in their hands. Why? Perhaps the fairy gift bore the power to call forth the dominating desire, instead of some well-calculated, prearranged demand.

If the opportunity came to us, what would be our "wishes"? Many of us might in fact say, with all speed:—"I wish to know the Masters." What is our picture when we think, with radiant anticipation, of the happiness of knowing a Master? Maybe an image of ourselves, in our very best guise, both inside and out, standing comfortably in a circle of Masters and their chêlas, listening reverently to their conversation on some lofty theme,—after having been welcomed with the kind and gracious words in which such loving beings would surely express their recognition of a stranger's presence. How smoothly and happily life would flow on were one permitted frequent entrance into such company. Or if alone with one's own Master, what companionship! All one's feelings would of course be understood and respected, all the hurts and jars removed. All would be love, sweetness, charm.

### One Who Dreamed True

How does that dream fit the facts that have been given us? Does anybody recall passages in H. P. B.'s writing that lend colour to any such idealistic setting? What of the saints who had close personal direction by the Master Jesus? One whose name naturally comes to mind is the recently canonized Margaret Mary. Her letters, written to one or another superior of her Order, are full of references to the, as she said, "unmerited" favours and expressions of tenderness that the Master lavished upon her. Equally prominent and far more readily accepted by her, are accounts of the manner in which she was disciplined by the Master for the most trifling infraction of the Rule of her Order, for any slightest manifestation of a flaw in the perfect and complete obedience that was characteristic of her. There was nothing of democracy in that relation between French nun and Master; nothing of that easy friendship and readily flowing intimacy which many pictures of such privileges require. Unsparingly, and in terse terms, her shortcomings were pointed out to her. If told what to do, perfect performance was

expected, and severe punishment followed any delays or lapses,—punishment devised by wise tenderness to be deeply felt and fully remedial in her particular case. It was the combination of tenderness and unsparing severity, the incessant demand for one's best effort, richly rewarded when fully given, that is, in our human experience, typified by the ideal parent and child. There can be no doubt of the allure, the consuming desire for complete union which this Master called forth in the heart of the one who described herself,—as consumed with such a thirst for union that nothing on earth could satisfy this longing.

But who is ready for the terms? We fear that frequently the second "wish" would be this—"Free me from such companionship. Its demands are too much for me!" And the third "wish" might be,—"Let me forget the sight of myself that came as I stood before the Master." Is that the experience of those to whom such companionship has been accorded? Not so far as any records go; quite the opposite. And naturally so, as it would be vouchsafed only to those who had grown out of the nursery, who were able to lose themselves, to give themselves, in a profound love.

To us, still nurslings, what does such a record as that of Margaret Mary offer? For one thing, a new type of ideal; a truer, more compelling picture of what real companionship with a Master means,—the necessary demand on his part for likeness; the insistence that the disciple shall live by the laws of the Master-degree:—the rare adventure of such an effort, the hunger and thirst to satisfy his demands which make the sweetness and delight of toil and pain. That, however, is on the heights. Less is demanded of, and so less can be given to, one of lower degree. But there is record of one such whose knowledge of his Master was equally clear and sure. He was generous enough to relate his first distinct consciousness of his Master. It was not some lofty or tender interview that was first accorded to him. He had been praying, agonizing over a situation that gave him great distress; had asked the Master's help—had asked for light on his duty. Within his heart came, he tells us, the response which he later paraphrased in these words: "What do you want *me* to do about it? What *can* I do about it?" It was his Master, and he knew it. The problem so perplexing was clear to him now. He saw that he had to pick up his load and carry it; that under the intense eyes of his newly-found Master, no shirking, no lamenting of his fate could be tolerated. Later, as he told the story, that same cross lifted with much foreboding, became his joy, his deepest delight.

This, too, we all know to be profoundly true, far more real than our reluctances, fears, hesitations; and we are responsible for what we know.

E.

# REPRINT

## ESCAPE OR ACHIEVEMENT*

"THEY change their skies, but not their natures, who cross the seas",—so runs the proverb; and doubtless many of us can bear witness that it is as true to-day as when it fell from the lips of the wise Roman of old.

"What must I do to be saved?" was the cry, when tossed on the stormy and uncharted ocean of orthodoxy: "Where shall I find a pilot?" signals the vessel, hove-to off the entrance to the fair haven of Theosophy.

One who, while serving his country gallantly on many a hard-fought field, yet strove according to his lights to be loyal to Him whom he regarded as his Heavenly Master, was wont to say that if he "could just squeeze inside of the Golden Gate," he would be entirely content. Before indulging in the smile of superiority at this honest, if lowly, confession, it might be well to examine whether this is not our own real, though possibly unconscious, attitude; whether, when we say "*Must* I give up this?", or, "Is it *necessary* to do that?", we really do not mean, "How much of this world's pleasures may I venture to indulge in? how close can I point to windward without being taken aback?" in other words, "Can I do this, or enjoy that, and yet just squeeze inside?"

Assuming, however, that the inquiry is made in sincerity and good faith, it is evident that the answer must depend upon the reply that the seeker makes to the question addressed to him in turn, "What is your object in life—to avoid an imaginary punishment, to obtain in the future a definite and limited reward? or to enter, now and here, upon a path of ever-increasing wisdom, knowledge, and peace, of inconceivable splendour and limitless extent? is your aim negative or positive? in a word, is it Escape or Achievement?"

Now from the standpoint of official Christianity, the attitude of the simple-hearted soldier is not only entirely logical, but thoroughly satisfactory: and if we also are of this way of thinking—if, as the *Bhagavad Gita* says, we prefer "a transient enjoyment of heaven to eternal absorption",—doubtless in Devachan we shall find fulness of joy; "Those who worship the Devatas go unto the Devatas".

But to those strong souls whose passionate longing is to find "the small, old path"; who disdain the gentler slopes which the feeble must

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needs follow; whose eyes seek the snowy pinnacle rather than the smiling valley, though it were the Land of Beulah itself; who, far from desiring the enjoyment of Devachan, regard it rather as a halt in their progress, a loss of time, so to speak, and would gladly forego its delights in order to reincarnate at once and continue without interruption their work for the good of the race;—what answer shall be returned them? Obviously none; since, for them, such questions never arise. They ask not, What *shall* I give up? but, What *can* I?; not, What indulgence *must* I deny myself? but, What encumbrance can I cast aside, that I may the more swiftly and easily mount?

It was said by One of old time, "Ye cannot serve two masters." God and Mammon were instances cited by the Teacher, but the saying holds true of any given opposite or conflicting aims. And the great trouble is that, although we may be unwilling to admit it even to ourselves, very few of us are really single-hearted: whether from physical infirmity, so-called hereditary tendency, or Karmic environment, matters not so far as regards the fact and the inevitable consequences resulting therefrom. Possibly all that many of us can accomplish in this incarnation will be in the nature of a species of compromise, or perhaps, more correctly, a net result,—a sort of moral diagonal of forces, so to speak, the resultant of the opposing tendencies of our earthly attractions and spiritual aspirations.

But he whose aim is single, whose eye never loses sight of the end, acts on his plane as the successful man of business on his: do we ever hear the latter ask, "Must I stay in my office eight hours a day? is it absolutely necessary to miss this race, or forego that dinner, in order to close this contract or elaborate that plan?" Does he not rather work fourteen, or sixteen hours, give up recreation, literary, artistic, social, even to a great extent the joys of the home circle, tax his ingenuity to the uttermost to devise new openings, find fresh fields for enterprise?

Perhaps it might be laid down broadly that any question prefaced by "must" should be answered in the negative; for the fact of its being put in that form proclaims, louder than words, that not yet is the seeker able to free himself from attachment; and until he can do this—until, as is said in *Through the Gates of Gold,* he can place the object before him, and clearly, coolly, and dispassionately examine it from all points of view, fully admitting its attractions as well as recognizing its drawbacks, and then calmly, deliberately, without a trace of regret or a sigh of longing, dismiss the very idea from his heart,—until he can do all this, forcible repression by mere strength of will avails nothing; the desire, coerced at one point, returns with accumulated strength at another; if not on the physical plane, then on the mental; if not in this incarnation, then in another. This is the teaching of all the ages, from the *Upanishads* to *Light on the Path,*—of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Bible, of Buddha and Jesus alike. Nothing that is done as a penance, as a so-called "mortification of the flesh," or merely out of deference to the

feelings, or opinions or prejudices of others, can be of any real value to the man himself.

One who makes a virtue of refusing to play cards in the social circle, while still having the desire in his heart, may yet lose money and reputation in Wall street; he who, against his own judgment, is persuaded to deprive himself of the comfort resulting from the rational use of tobacco, may wreck his nerves by inordinate indulgence in strong tea,—and this without incurring the censure of clergymen, reformers, or old women of either sex. In this, as in all things, we may learn from the working of Nature. The tree yields fruit not only after its kind, but in its own due time. There is neither haste nor delay in her evolutionary methods,—first the blossom and then the fruit, is her unvarying rule: and, knowing this, we do not expect to pluck the matured ear of July from the tender shoot of April: we rejoice in the budding sweetness of the vineyard in the joyous Springtide, untroubled by any anxiety lest the golden glory of September should fail to ripen the purple clusters.

So in our daily round and occupation, everything comes in its appointed time and refuses to be hurried: sculptured granite is no more immovable than the Express, a second before its flying wheels begin to turn; as the hand on the dial points to the hour, the ingenious mechanism of the time-lock swings back the massive doors of the vault which, a moment before, would have defied the strength of a hundred men to open.

"And what shall I do with my sword?" asked the brilliant young courtier of George Fox, by whose teachings he had become converted to Quakerism. "Friend", replied the wise and courteous man of peace, "wear it,—as long as thou canst!"; but full soon William Penn counted it all joy to exchange jewelled sword and velvet coat for the simple garb of the people with whom he had cast in his lot. And when the day comes —as come it must, in the fulness of time—when we are ready, in this spirit, to lay everything on the altar, whether choice possessions or valued opinions, favorite habits or cherished beliefs, our so-called virtues not less than what are termed our vices; when we can do all this, not as a sacrifice, but with joy and gladness, when our songs of deliverance are borne upon the upwreathing incense; then we, likewise, shall be no longer perplexed by the "must" or the "shall", for we shall then be treading the King's Highway of Achievement, and not scuffling along the back alleys of Escape.

Let us then be ever on guard lest aught tempt us from that "Middle Road" which the Lord Buddha pointed out to us, and in which we know our feet to be set; and by following it in all patience and loyalty, with dauntless will and unswerving devotion, we shall in his own time—which is always the best time—come to realize the portion which he has assured us shall be that of all who truly love and serve him.

"By few or many steps such shall attain
Nirvana's blest abode."

B. N. Acle, F. T. S.

# ON THE SCREEN OF TIME

THE variety of topics covered was amazing. Our visitor was young, was feminine, and had an inquiring mind. Let us say that the questions scintillated. For lack of space, very few of them, or their answers, can be recorded.

"Do members of The Theosophical Society approve of dancing?" That was the first. I heard someone gasp. But he pulled himself together, and began furiously to wonder whether he approved of dancing or not. He had forgotten. Perhaps to gain time (it was the Engineer), he explained that members of the Society are not expected to see, and in fact do not see, eye to eye in regard to such matters, and that membership does not imply belief in any dogma or theory whatsoever. He read aloud the first and only binding object of the Society. Then, with considerable presence of mind, he turned to the Philosopher and asked him what he thought about dancing. The Philosopher glared at him, but answered cheerfully:

"It depends. Modern dancing I abhor. It is not only immodest; it is purposely immoral. Go back fifteen years or so, to the days of waltzing, and even then it was a queer proceeding. A man was introduced to a woman whom he had never seen before. After a preliminary bow, he grabbed her round the waist, grasped her free hand, pressed her firmly to his side, and did his best to whirl her round the room without colliding with other whirlers. If, instead of whirling, they had sat down in a similar attitude—holding hands, with their arms around one another's waists—it would very properly have been regarded as an outrageous proceeding. Yet everyone danced, and no one thought anything about it. I am desperately old fashioned, and was brought up to think of women as sensitive and refined and innately modest. Just what they felt and thought about waltzing—if anything—I do not pretend to know. Their mothers taught them to do it, just as their mothers taught them to appear in public, once the lights were lit, with a large part of their anatomy exposed."

"Don't you approve of low-neck dresses?"

"It depends", answered the Philosopher, glaring once more at the Engineer. "I can remember the time (it feels like centuries ago) when a respectable girl, if her clothing had been torn in a ball room, to the extent of exposing her bare knees, would have fainted. It would not have been modest not to faint. But that same young lady wore nothing on her arms, very little on her back, while her bosom was only a degree more than half covered. . . . I infer that women are creatures of habit".

"But surely", inquired our visitor rather anxiously, "surely a woman's face is as revealing as her arms; and no one would suggest that she ought to keep her face covered!"

"Lots of people have suggested it, and lots of women do it and prefer to do it", the Philosopher retorted grimly. "But", he added, with gathering indignation, "it is not my business to tell women how to dress or how much of their person they ought to exhibit. I am not married. I have no daughters. And if other men are willing to let their women appear with only parts of themselves covered, it is their affair and not mine!"

We laughed. "There is nothing in the world more beautiful than a beautiful woman", said the Philosopher, as if this had some bearing on the subject. "Any attitude toward real beauty, which is less than that of reverence, is profanation, is a sort of sacrilege. How many people are there who reverence anything!"

But we were getting into deep water, particularly as we were not alone; so the Engineer, who by now had had ample time in which to orient himself, reproached the Philosopher with having sidetracked the subject. "I thought we were discussing dancing", he concluded.

"We were", answered the Philosopher. "Or, rather, you were good enough to ask me what I thought about it. Have you had time to find out what you think?"

"Yes", said the Engineer. "I have. And I have come to the conclusion that I approve enthusiastically of the Minuet. I am sure you would adore the Minuet" (this, to the Philosopher). "It is so graceful. And you would never have to touch more than the tips of a woman's fingers! . . . Seriously, I do think that such dances as the Minuet, while absolutely modest, provide exercise, amusement, and, incidentally, admirable training in deportment. They belong to an age when women, outwardly, at least, were treated with respect. Their revival might induce a similar condition in the women, and a similar attitude on the part of the men".

Our visitor, who has some modern notions, though not many, gazed at him suspiciously. "What do you mean", she asked, "by 'inducing a similar condition in the women'?"

"I mean", replied the Engineer, unabashed, "that if women hold their womanhood cheaply, men will take it at the same valuation".

"Young lady", interrupted the Philosopher, who feels strongly on this subject, "manners are not without meaning. The best of manners may conceal much that is evil, just as entire absence of manners may conceal much that is good. None the less, when the standard of manners deteriorates, you may be certain that loss of mutual respect accounts for it. And while the blame for this may be divided equally, in the eyes of God, between women and men, I am certain that anything in the nature of self-assertion on the part of women, just because it is essentially unfeminine, robs men, to that extent, of respect for them. A real

man does not admire a man who masquerades in petticoats; and if the sex of the man in petticoats happens, biologically, to be female, a real man finds it difficult to be ordinarily polite. The trouble seems to be that there are not many real men or real women alive at the present time. In the old days, if one man called another man a liar, one of the two had to die. As things now are, a man can call another man a liar and a thief to his face, all day and every day (it has happened among the highest officials of New York), and not even ink is spilled in consequence. This is partly because men, for good reason, have become indifferent to the opinion of women, while women no longer demand that a man shall be manly".

"A Pacifist would find evidence of progress in what you have said", the Student remarked quizzically.

"He would", replied the Philosopher; "and he would be right, if progress were to mean progress in Pacifism. Fortunately, it does not".

"Do Theosophists approve of the theatre?" inquired our visitor suddenly.

It was going to be difficult, we could see, to remove from this young person's mind the popular impression that members of The Theosophical Society accept some new creed,—and a creed, presumably, which covers mundane as well as celestial topics! We explained again that, in all probability, there were no two members of the Society whose opinion of the theatre could be the same. Then, by common consent, we appealed to the Historian to answer her question.

"On the understanding that I speak for myself only", he said, "I must confess that I do not like the theatre. The psychic atmosphere of most theatres is simply beastly. But even if the effect of a play on an audience were innocuous, which I could not admit, the question of the effect on the actors and actresses would have to be considered. And the effect on them, in my opinion, is very bad. A man who is willing to earn his living by making faces and pretending to be someone whom he is not, must be a poor creature to start with".

"Now really", interrupted the Student, "if that be your definition of acting, I shall be obliged to emphasize your statement that you speak for yourself only. One man paints Hamlet in colours; another carves him in stone, while a third acts him,—that is to say, brings him to life by means of voice, gesture and dress. And, of the three methods, each of which is an art, I should say that the third is by far the most vivid".

"On that theory", the Historian replied, "the woman who served as model for the Venus of Milo was as great an artist as the sculptor who immortalized her form in marble!"

"There is no analogy", said the Student. "An actor lives his part. He does not simply 'make up' to look it. He embodies the character, the feelings, the thoughts, of the person he represents".

"You mean that he plays at being the subject he portrays. He plays at being a hero or a villain as circumstances may require. He plays that

he is old or plays that he is young,—a Dane or a Moor or an English King. He plays to amuse others, for money".

"A musician who interprets the compositions of others, plays to amuse others, for money. What is the difference?"

"Even if there were no difference—and I believe there is—you have admitted, indirectly, from the very wording of your question, that the man who merely interprets the compositions of others, is not to be classed with the artist who creates. And, as I see it, art, really to be art, must be creative: it must result in giving permanent physical expression to something previously unseen or unheard".

"I doubt whether you are justified in limiting art to the production of permanent or lasting things. It seems to me that even a cook may be an artist,—and the products of a cook are made to disappear!"

"We are using words in different senses", said the Historian. "You would not rank even Ude, who left Lord Sefton's service because on one occasion a guest added pepper to his soup,—you would not rank Ude with Praxiteles or Michael Angelo. Nor can I believe that you would rank Sir Henry Irving with Tennyson, or with any of the great composers. I am prepared to grant that in one sense a cook may be an artist. But would you wish your son to earn his living as a cook, even supposing he could become the most artistic cook who ever lived? You might be willing to let him cook, as a hobby, a pastime; but you would not be willing to let him turn his pastime into a profession. In varying degree you might be willing, and even glad, to let him devote his spare time to baseball, or to amateur theatricals, or to playing the violin. But you would object strenuously, I believe, if he wished to earn his living by means of play. It would be demoralizing, and you know it".

Very eagerly our visitor asked: "How about women on the stage?" But at this critical moment the Ancient appeared on the scene, carrying with him a bulky envelope. "I am sorry to interrupt your discussion", he said, "but we ought to consider the recent Convention of the British national branch of The Theosophical Society. I have with me the report of its proceedings, and a mass of correspondence which has resulted".

Our visitor said good-bye. "What is it all about?" asked the Engineer, who works fourteen hours a day, and whose spare time is limited.

"It amounts to this", the Ancient replied: "Mr. Lincoln was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions. In that capacity he introduced a resolution endorsing the resolution which was passed unanimously last April, at the Convention in New York of the Society as a whole,—the resolution which is given on page 78 of the July, 1920, issue of THE THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY, and which reads as follows:

" 'Pursuant to the action of the Executive Committee, and confirming the self-expulsion of certain German members, be it

" 'Resolved, That the Charters of the Berlin Branch in Germany and of the Dresden Branch in Germany, are hereby cancelled, and that the Charters of all other Branches of The Theosophical Society, if any,

which adopt or approve the attitude of said Berlin and Dresden Branches shall at once be cancelled by the Executive Committee of the Society.

" 'Resolved, That all members of the Society who have endorsed the attitude of said German Branches are hereby expelled, and that all other members, if any, who may hereafter take similar action shall at once be expelled by the Executive Committee.'

"It appears that Mr. Lincoln's proposal to endorse the foregoing resolution met with active opposition, led by Mr. Kennedy, and that, to avoid open conflict, 'it was felt by the meeting that judgment should be suspended for a year'."

"On what grounds", asked the Engineer, "did Mr. Kennedy object to the resolution passed in New York?"

"His objections are exactly the same, in substance, as those advanced by Mr. Paul Raatz and by many other former members of the Society in Germany".

"That is interesting", the Engineer commented. "It means that the English Branch of our Society, instead of leading the opinion of Great Britain, instead of speaking for the crucified soul of the British people, is reflecting the conflict and confusion which the lower psychic nature of Great Britain has made manifest, in terms of Pro-Germanism and Bolshevism, ever since the Armistice. I am sorry. And I suppose that, as usual, it is done in the name of Universal Brotherhood!"

"Yes", answered the Ancient. "It is done in the name of Universal Brotherhood. Let in everyone; expel no one,—we are told. It does not seem to matter if women and children are tortured and outraged. The men who commit such crimes; the men who condone such crimes; the men who refuse to condemn such crimes, with the men who, in the name of God and of Theosophy, vehemently denounce such crimes,—all alike are fitting material for that nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood which the Society is trying to form."

"Are they crazy?" asked the Student.

"It depends upon what you mean by 'crazy' ", the Ancient replied. "That they understand nothing of brotherhood and nothing of Theosophy, is obvious. But there is a vast difference between being blind and being crazy,—unless the blindness be in any way wanton, or due to some deep-seated personal bias".

"But why did those who framed the resolution, agree to suspend judgment for a year?"

"I believe they thought it would be untheosophical to fight it out on the floor of the Convention. They went so far, for the sake of peace, as to submit to the election of Mr. Kennedy as General Secretary,—not seeming to realize that, under a strict interpretation of the resolution passed by the Convention of the Society as a whole, it might well be considered that Mr. Kennedy had already expelled himself from membership. The motive in sacrificing so much for the sake of peace, un-

doubtedly was sincerely unselfish; but I must say that it seems to me to have been a mistake".

"It reflected the best of England's present attitude", said the Philosopher. "It was not sure of itself. England's mental confusion; her lack of strong, clear-seeing leadership, based on bed-rock principle, is deplorable. She is like a ship without a helmsman. See the way she has allowed herself to play Germany's game! See the way she is meeting Bolshevism, not only in Russia, but within her own household! There are many well-meaning and really good people in England, who suffer deeply from this lack of leadership, and who see exactly where things are drifting, but who lack the experience, perhaps, which would enable them to seize the rudder and to steer the foundering ship into port".

"Not a single point was brought up at their meeting in England", said the Ancient, "which had not been thrashed out at the Convention in New York. If the report in the July issue of the QUARTERLY had not only been read, but had been studied; if arguments had been analyzed, and principles had been sought until found,—I do not believe that the final decision of the English members would have been to suspend judgment. Mr. Kennedy and his friends are still arguing that the function of the Society, and even of the QUARTERLY, is limited to the enunciation of generalities. Thus, from their standpoint, so far as it is understandable, it is lawful to say, 'Brotherhood is our ideal'; but it is unlawful, theosophically, to say, 'Brotherhood does not of necessity mean Communism.' It is unlawful to say this, we are asked to believe, for the reason that there are some people who think that community of goods (not to speak of community of wives) is of the essence of Brotherhood. In other words, what 'some people' think, it is untheosophical to combat".

"Shades of H. P. B.!" interjected the Student.

"Hush!" the Ancient retorted. "Leave H. P. B. out of it. There might be an explosion.

"These same people", he continued, "are the victims also of a strange delusion about 'politics'. They imagine that the QUARTERLY has become 'political', and that our constant effort to apply theosophical principles practically, not only to the problems of the individual, but to the problems of nations, and to the interpretation of history, is intensely untheosophical. In this case also, they do not object to generalities; they can endure such statements as, 'Honesty is beautiful': but if you add, 'Crime is hideous', you are 'in danger of the judgment', while if you dare to say that a judge on the bench may be a good theosophist while sentencing a criminal to a term in prison,—you are in danger of hell fire!"

"Is it that", asked the Historian, "or can it be that the QUARTERLY has ridden roughshod over precious but hidden idols, such as Bolshevism? Bolshevism, as you are aware, has quite a following in England. It appeals to the discontented, and to those whose ambitions have been thwarted. It appeals also to those who resent the 'struggle for life'. It is a nostrum, and, like certain widely advertised patent medicines,

though it kill, it makes big promises, and will absolutely guarantee 'a change'."

"Suppose", said the Philosopher, "that we try to see the matter from the point of view of Mr. Kennedy and his friends. After all, the only power for evil which any wrong attitude or action possesses, is the element of truth and right which it has deflected and distorted. If, then, we can find the element of right in their attitude, and separate this from the wrong,—we shall be that much nearer the truth, and, therefore, that much further away from the seat of the trouble.

"It is clear, in the first place, that they are basing their contention upon the principle of freedom in The Theosophical Society. We have asserted many times that any member is free to hold any opinions he pleases in matters of belief, provided he extend equal tolerance to the beliefs of others. This is a vital principle, but it is not contravened (as they claim) by any resolution passed at the Convention.

"The Convention declared that, because many people were urging pacifism and neutrality in the name of Brotherhood, and because it is the first object of The Theosophical Society to form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity, the Society was compelled to answer that war is not of necessity a violation of brotherhood. Secondly, it was declared that when an individual sees clearly that moral principles are at stake, neutrality for him must be impossible.

"To deny either statement leads immediately to contradiction and absurdity. H. P. B. stated constantly that a professional soldier may be a good theosophist. But, again, there is no need to drag H. P. B. into it! There is such a thing as common sense, and although there are some fanatics who deny that the use of force is justifiable, even to protect a woman or child from outrage, I, in my turn, deny them the right to attach to such insanity the name of Theosophy or the name of Brotherhood.

"Suppose, for instance, that it were to become noised abroad that Theosophy stands for free love, or for some similar horror. Suppose that a group of people, daring to call themselves theosophists, were publicly to proclaim such beliefs. Can it be pretended that our Society would not have the right to defend its good name by repudiation and protest? It would not only have the right, but, in easily imaginable circumstances, protest would be its immediate duty.

"The second claim of these few English members, as I understand it, is that we should welcome all who seek truth and theosophic ideals. We should,—granting the sincerity of applicants. We exclude no one because of past errors. But present actions are different. When it is obvious that a member is working for purposes which are the opposite of those of the Society, it follows that that member and the Society must part company. Usually this is brought about by the resignation of the member. But no matter how brought about, the principle is clear that while we hold the door as widely open as possible for everyone who

desires the opportunity to accompany us on our journey, the Society must of necessity retain the right to drop those who pull against its course and who oppose its aims".

"It should not be forgotten", interjected the Scientist, "that a nucleus is formed by a process of elimination as well as by accretion. These English members seem to have paid no attention to the word 'nucleus', or to its significance, but seem, instead, to have been carried away by the idea of a meaningless, purposeless, characterless conglomerate of human beings, the sole function of which is to carry a banner labelled Brotherhood. You would not wish me to contribute a dissertation on the subject of nuclei, but it would be well at least to remember that a structural difference between the nucleus and the rest of the cell-protoplasm is indicated by its greater resistance to powerful reagents, and that a nucleus is composed of (1) a nuclear membrane, (2) nuclear network, and (3) nucleoplasm, and containing nucleoli, which are the nucleus of a nucleus. That a true nucleus controls the character and function of the cell, is vital, as I see it, to our entire discussion. The Theosophical Society owes it to its Founders and to mankind, to prevent the use of its forces for purposes which are antagonistic to its own".

"That even one of the English members should have failed England is profoundly to be regretted", said the Engineer. "England did so splendidly during the war, that her moral collapse, due to reaction, is more tragic than all the deaths of her bravest. She needs help sorely, and she deserves it. Apart from the hosts of her dead, who have won age-long blessings for her, she ought to have found in the British branch of The Theosophical Society, her guiding 'nucleus' and strongest spiritual impulse. More than that, she ought to have found intellectual clarity and sure grasp of principle".

"There is, I think, yet another way of approaching this subject", the Scholar suggested finally; "and while our discussion, so far, should remove the haze which in many minds still surrounds it, we must remember that, while it seemed to have been thrashed out at the general Convention in New York, the result, in England, proved that enough had not been said.

"I can imagine that a superficial student of Theosophy might argue that because 'all souls are identical with the Oversoul', therefore Brotherhood is a fact in nature. Consequently, the function of The Theosophical Society is simply to recognize that fact. Consequently, all who recognize Brotherhood as a fact, or who say they do, are worthy of membership in the Society.

"The fallacies packed into such a chain of reasoning are innumerable. First, not all men have souls. Second, while a Brotherhood of souls already exists in the spiritual world, it does not follow, unfortunately, that it already exists in this world. We know, on the contrary, that the very opposite of Brotherhood exists, for there are many who fight consciously against the purposes of the soul, and there are

many more who fight against those purposes unconsciously. Third, instead of the function of The Theosophical Society being simply to recognize an existing order, its function is to educate its members into a realization, not only in understanding but in action, of a spiritual truth, and thus to introduce into this world, or to make manifest in this world, an ideal as a reality. Fourth, to be a worthy member of the Society involves much more than the intellectual and theoretical acceptance of a belief in Brotherhood.

"Suppose, for instance, that a man joins the Society, stating that he believes in the principle of Brotherhood. Suppose that he then commits a murder, or several murders, and that he advocates murder,—perhaps on the ground that people are in his way, and that, as they are happier in heaven, his understanding of brotherhood obliges him to send them there. Question: Would such a man be a worthy member of the Society, or would it be the duty of the Society to expel him?

"Suppose that another man, who says he is devoted to the cause of Brotherhood, does not actually commit murder, but admires the man who does; avowedly approves the first man's reasons for 'sending people to heaven', and declares that any condemnation of murder is unbrotherly and untheosophical. Is he worthy of membership in the Society, or ought he to be expelled?

"Suppose, now, that a man is in no sense a murderer, but is either incapable of seeing a moral principle, so that murder leaves him indifferent, or has wilfully closed his eyes because of personal or racial prejudice, refusing to see murder as murder, and condoning crime by phrases such as, 'Why make such a fuss?' 'Don't be disagreeable', 'Don't be vindictive', 'We must be brotherly'. Speaking for myself, I have more respect for the man who murders, than for the man who thus condones crime, or the condoners of crime, under a cloak of charity and brotherhood. When, in addition, the cloak of Theosophy is used, I feel that not only the Society itself is dishonored, but that every member is compromised, and is entitled, therefore, to such protection and vindication as the Executive Committee is in a position to afford. The offender has a perfect right, of course, to declare that his 'charity' is the only genuine expression of Theosophy. In nearly every case, that is exactly what he does declare. But if his so-called charity is discreditable to the Society, discreditable to its Founders, and discreditable to its members; if his charity is a caricature of Theosophy and brings its ideals into contempt,—then, in my opinion, it is grossly unfair to all concerned that they,—and, above all, Theosophy itself,—should be obliged to suffer for his self-gratification. To pretend that freedom of speech requires it, is to confuse freedom with license,—and license, actually, is just what such people mean when they talk about freedom. They forget that freedom is impossible without law and order, and without a large element, also, of that sort of decency which leads a man to retire from an association (in this case, The Theosophical Society as last assembled in

Convention) with which he finds himself completely out of harmony."

"Might we not add", asked the Student, " 'when it is intimated that his presence has become offensive'?"

"One more question," the Student added: "What did this meeting of English members at Newcastle represent?"

"It was a meeting, or convention," said the Ancient, "of the British national branch of The Theosophical Society. It is a *branch* of the parent Society. If there were a branch in Chicago with as many members as there are in England, both the Chicago branch and the British national branch would be entitled to the same number of delegates, and of votes, at the annual Convention of The Theosophical Society, such as was held in New York last April. All branches are represented, either in person or by proxy, at such Conventions, and it is only then, and in that way, that the Society can express itself. At the last Convention, the Society did express itself, unanimously and emphatically. All that has happened is that a few English members—very few, I believe—declare themselves, and are declared, to be radically alien to the Society as a whole." T.

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*As a strong antiseptic prevents the growth of the germs of disease, so suffering checks the taint of base and selfish feelings, which so easily insinuate themselves into our hearts, and impair the purity of our motives and intentions. Suffering chastens the soul and its aspirations, the mind and its views, the heart and its affections. Whatever tends to free us from selfish motives must help to increase the merit of our thoughts, words, and actions. Suffering increases merit by insuring not only greater purity, but also greater earnestness of motive. It has a bracing influence upon the will, and gives tone and vigour to its exercise. Difficulties and sufferings bring out manliness, and strength of will, and nobility of soul. They are earnestness of purpose. They are an unmistakable test of solid virtue. There is beauty and merit in each least aspiration of virtue breathed on the playful wing of joy, but there is greater and more solid merit in the depth and vigour of determination evinced in the practice of virtue under difficulties, temptations and trials. There is no trial, temptation, or suffering which cannot be turned into a blessing by the will of a conscious sufferer.*—GOD AND HUMAN SUFFERING.

# LETTERS TO STUDENTS

July 14th, 1912.

DEAR ———

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I also take for granted that you devote at least half an hour daily to meditation and to self-examination. This is absolutely essential, for it is during this period that we really grow, that we get the sustenance that is necessary for growth. While it is hard to keep this rule fully and conscientiously, you will learn to look forward to this time as the best part of each day. There is no limit to our organization. Even the oldest members, the member who has made the most progress, and many have made very great progress indeed, tell us that the way opens up beyond in an unlimited vista of further heights to be scaled, with those standing by who have scaled these further heights, and who stand ready to do everything they can to help.

So make your own ideal high. "Hitch your wagon to a star." We cannot hope to reach our goal at once, but at least let us have a great goal and not a little one. There is no limit to the progress which you can make in just the circumstances that you are in. You may feel that it is not so, and that if you had more leisure, or did not have to work so hard, or could read and study more, or if circumstances were different in some way or other, you could go further and faster; but it is not so. It is just the circumstances which we are in that are the very best possible for us, and which will produce the conditions we need to surmount and to conquer, so bringing out the new qualities which we need.

Of course it is hard, but we are trying to do a great thing, nothing less than to anticipate by scores of thousands of years the general evolution of the rest of humanity. We must force ourselves ahead, because the soul calls us, the Masters call, and are waiting for us to grow, so that we can help them help others. It is a great task which we have ahead of us, and it has its great rewards.

I shall be glad to hear from you frequently, and to try to answer any questions which you may want to ask.

Fraternally,
C. A. GRISCOM.

October 15th, 1912.

DEAR ———

Your letter came while I was in Europe; I returned a week ago, and am taking the first opportunity to thank you for your letter and for the straightforward way in which you have written. That is most necessary if this correspondence is to be really helpful to you—as I earnestly desire.

Answering first your question about meditation, for that is the most important subject for us all to understand. Yes, I think it is very desirable to select some one hour for meditation, and to keep the time zealously for it, allowing nothing but an urgent duty to interfere with the half hour or more given to it. There are several reasons for this counsel; for one, we thus take advantage of the law of habit, or to put it in a different way, the law of periodicity. In this connection, one of our members recently cited experiments in which large masses of metal were moved by finger pressure constantly and rhythmically applied. Think this out and you will see how it applies.

Most of us have found that it is more important to choose an hour that can be kept every day, than to consider whether it shall be early or late. In many ways the early morning hours are the most favourable for people who are living outwardly in the whirl of things, for in the early morning the cares and distractions of the day are less in our thoughts, our minds are not so distinctly dominant. . . Our private meditations should spring out of our lives, should in fact *be* our lives. Too many times we are inclined to think of meditation as a formal exercise to be gone through with because we are told to do it, just as listless children may go through an exercise in calisthenics and get no good from it. We are told that we get our real knowledge through meditation; so evidently one fruitful subject for meditation will be the thing or things that we truly want to know.

There are many steps to be taken before we reach meditation as the Great Ones know it, and they have to be passed one by one. With our Western habits of thought, it is often easier to learn to pray than to learn to meditate; both lead in the end to the same goal. Why not try the experiment of giving the first part of every meditation period to prayer? Pray to the Master, imagine that he is near you (for it is only in your imagination that he is far away from you!), tell him very simply about your desire to draw close to him, ask his guidance in any problems that you have to meet, resign your will absolutely to him, longing only to find out his way that you may do it. Then try to centre your heart on him, compel your mind to keep still, and instead of talking to him, "meditate" on him. This is only one of many ways; but try it and let me know whether you find any help in it. . .

As you study, the light will come; here a little, there a little. Unless you have a considerable amount of time to give to study, I think you would do better to reserve the reading of the *Secret Doctrine* until later. It contains an enormous mass of very valuable material, which is to be had by mining, as one digs information out of an encyclopædia; but you do not appear to need that kind of reading at present.

Now about "practical work"; that is a most sacred obligation, and chances to meet it will come, as you look for them. Many of our members are actively engaged in church work, not *talking* Theosophy

as such, but trying to apply the "theosophic method" to their work, and doing it all for the Master.

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Until we become masters of our minds, they serve us many a bad turn. If thoughts come to you that you do not wish to entertain, give your mind the antidote as quickly and as firmly as possible. Force it every time this happens to dwell on something that is clean and true, picture to yourself vividly some noble act,—and then go and *do something* for somebody else that you would not otherwise have done.

I shall be glad to hear from you again when you feel like writing, and do not hesitate to ask over again any questions to which I have not given answers as explicit as you desired.

With all good wishes for you, I am,

Sincerely yours,

C. A. Griscom.

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December 1st, 1912.

Dear ———

* * * * * * *

Answering your question first, I should say that without doubt the experience you describe is psychic and not spiritual. It is practically an invariable rule that we *feel* spiritual things long before we can apprehend them through any other sense, such as sight or hearing; and by "long before" I mean that we are likely to have several years when our only contact with the real inner world will be through feeling. If a person has natural psychic gifts they are a barrier and not a help, unless they are dealt with very sternly. They must be put aside in every possible way, never permitted to function, and kept ruthlessly in the background, until we have firmly established ourselves in the inner world—and then they are no longer necessary, and need not be used for our further progress, as we shall have then other and better faculties that more than take their place.

You inquire why we should ask questions of older students when we are told to go to the Master for inward light and guidance. The two directions are not contradictory, although they may at first seem so. We must do both things faithfully; for until we are able to go directly to the Master himself, he will send his reply to our request for help through other channels. The student, who is so used, may perhaps be unaware that the Master is using him as a means of giving you the truth for which you have asked the Master; that does not matter. But the Master must use some such means until you are capable of direct communion.

It is not that, if he wished, he could not reach you in any one of a hundred ways, including that of appearing before you in his physical body, and talking to you in the ordinary, commonplace way. It is that

any experience of the kind, even the slightest, would result in a violent reaction which can be directly measured by the height from which the force comes. We react from any spiritual truth simply from the power that is in it. This is the case whether we read the truth in a devotional book, have it communicated to us in a letter, or in a talk, or in any other way; and the truer it is, or seems to us to be, the greater will be the reaction of our lower natures from it. This reaction is usually so indirect that it is very difficult for us to trace it. For instance, we may go to a meeting, have a very agreeable and stimulating time, and feel that it has done us a great deal of good. Two days later we may lose our temper and be very disagreeable to a friend. It is hard to realize that the two things are related, but they are. One is directly caused by the other. The reaction from spiritual experience may break out in any kind of physical disturbance, or on the mental, moral or emotional planes. One of the things that we have to do in the course of our training is to recognize our reactions, and to learn to look for, and so to control them, before they dominate us.

No, I do not think you are "imagining" the help to which you refer. You probably are not yet in a position to trace it back with assurance to its source, and that really is not of much importance to you just now; but the fact is, that we are all of us given, every day, help and encouragement of which we are entirely unconscious, and, worse still, opportunities to which we pay not the slightest heed. Look constantly for such guidance, and do not distrust it when you get it!

You ask what "practical work" means—whether you should look for a wider field. I have not time now to answer that fully, but here is a clue to the answer, which you can work out for yourself: remember that your surroundings, your work, your duties, are not accidental, that they are nicely adjusted to teach you lessons that you need to learn; remember, too, that it matters little *what* we do, so long as we do it for the Master, as a means of serving him and making his will our own, and consequently do the thing, whatever it may be, as well as we are capable of doing it.

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With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,
C. A. Griscom.

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January 26th, 1913.

Dear ———

I was much interested in your letter of January 7th, which helps me in my efforts to help you. There is the greatest difference in the kind of letters which I receive. No one can pour information down another's throat. We must ask in order to

receive. We must always make a demand upon the spiritual law before it will come to our aid. And I am happy in the knowledge that all my deficiencies will be supplemented by those much wiser than I am; that what you need in the way of help and instruction, which I cannot furnish, you will get in other ways. Therefore do not depend upon me, but go into your own heart for the faith and inspiration and knowledge which you seek. It is there that we get our real help and guidance, and that is as it should be.

We all of us have periods of dryness; we all have times of depression; we all suffer now and again from inability to feel the reality of the spiritual world. If you will read the lives of the saints, you will see that it is an almost invariable complaint. You will also see many suggestions as to how to act at such times. Generally speaking the thing to do is to go right on with our regular spiritual exercises, whatever they may be, pray regularly, try to meditate our usual time, read our devotional books,—in a word, act just as if we felt as we should like to feel. The power we generate doing these things when we do not want to do them, and when it is an effort to do them, gradually wears away the barrier which has temporarily come between us and the sun. Then, one day, the light breaks through and we are all right again until the next attack comes on. We often grow more during these periods of depression and dryness, than during the periods of spiritual fervour and light and life, because we are trying harder, we are actually making more effort, and it is effort that counts, not what seems to us to be the results. Above all, we must take these periods with serenity, and must try to realize that they are not ourselves but separate from us,—something that comes from our past, or from outside, from the evil of the world, from any lower source, and gradually learn to deal with them impersonally. If you have a boil, you recognize it, suffer from it, treat it, are glad to get rid of it, but it never occurs to you to identify yourself with it. Treat your periods of depression this same way. Study them. You will find that they come in cycles, perhaps regular cycles, for we are affected by many cyclic laws which we do not understand at all.

With reference to your question about meditation. Of course, as you suggest, we must go to our meditation as a duty to perform whether we like it or not. It is only by keeping at it in spite of lack of results, of distaste, of fatigue, of inertia, of any hindrance of any kind, that we can hope finally to learn how to do it properly. My idea went a step beyond that. I wanted to suggest that in actual fact the time of meditation is the time we should look forward to in all the day as that time when we are happiest and most peaceful and most joyful. If we really understood, it would be looked forward to eagerly.

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With kindest regards, I am

Fraternally,

C. A. Griscom.

April 12th, 1913.

DEAR ———

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Of course we all do want a willing and obedient heart, but that only comes through love. Now love comes through obedience; hence you see the necessity of forcing ourselves to do things which we know we ought to do, even when we are depressed and do not feel at all like doing them. It is the force we rouse in order to do them, that gradually wears away the obstructions to a more perfect performance. So long as we feel resentment of any kind, it is proof positive that we need just that sort of experience; resentment being the sign that, in that particular, our self-will is very much awake. Resentment means that we want to do things our way, and not the Master's way. We resent the interference with our own way. Of course this does not always appear on the surface, but it always exists underneath.

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No one can find the Kingdom of Heaven unaided. They must be helped by those above them, by those who are their fellow-students, and, finally, by those below them,—at least, to the extent that they pass on the teaching which has been given them. It is not sufficient to go on plodding year after year. We need personal direction. And the only way to get this personal help is to ask for it; not generally, but specifically, in detail.

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If I do not reply to some question of yours, it may be because I think the real answer is contained in something else I write. If you do not feel so, write again.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

C. A. GRISCOM.

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January 21st, 1914.

DEAR ———

Thank you for your letter of the 28th.

But you must *not* be reluctant to write me and, if necessary, "pour out your troubles". It is a great privilege that you should be willing to do so, and, if you feel that it will be of help, please do not hesitate.

Remember that we cannot hope to get into heaven by ourselves. As a matter of fact, at certain points on the road, we need three kinds of help: we need the help of those above us; we need the help of our comrades; and we need the help of those we have helped—of those below us. It is well to struggle courageously, indomitably, perseveringly; but it is also well to realize that we cannot win without the assistance

of others. We need help,—all of us: it is a law of brotherhood that we cannot do without it.

I do not think it does any good to change our circumstances; certainly not by doing violence to natural conditions. Life will surely do it for us when our soul's good needs a different set. What we must strive to do is to live perfectly in any circumstances. Brother Lawrence was a cook for thirty-five years, and attained such a degree of holiness in that environment, that bishops and cardinals came from all over France to consult with him about their problems and their souls.

The distractions, the lack of privacy, the interruptions of your life, provide you with the opportunity you need to cultivate serenity, humility, resignation, and the ability to offer everything you do on the altar of the Higher Self—the Master. That is the true concentration, true continuous meditation.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,
C. A. Griscom.

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October 1st, 1914.

Dear ———

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The emphasis, you will see, is laid upon *life,* upon how to live. If we live properly, it does not matter what we know. Knowledge will come.

Proper living is a question of detail. The best definition of a saint I know is:—"A saint is not one who practises heroic virtues; but one who practises common virtues to an heroic degree".

At the last analysis, what we are all trying to do is to become saints, i.e. to practise ordinary, commonplace virtues to an heroic degree. That means infinite attention to the details of life: how we sit, how we eat, what we eat, how we sleep and how much and when; how we talk and what we say; how we walk and think and act, from morning until night. A very good plan is to picture to ourselves how we would behave if we were in the presence of a Master, and then act accordingly,—in every detail of life.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,
C. A. Griscom.

# REVIEWS

*India and the West,* by C. R. Lanman, Journal of the American Oriental Society, October, 1920.

This is the Presidential Address delivered by Professor Lanman, of Harvard University, before the American Oriental Society, at Ithaca, on April 6, 1920. The full title is: "India and the West with a Plea for Team-Work among Scholars"; and Professor Lanman defines team-work with both humour and feeling as "'work done by the players of a team collectively, for example, by the players of a football eleven.' These must do each his best for the success of his team as a whole. To this end, they must be free from the slightest feeling of personal jealousy, and must not allow the hope of personal advantage to influence any thought or act." The Address is, therefore, a plea for the study of Indian and other Oriental religions and literatures in this generous and gentle spirit.

Developing his subject, Professor Lanman reminds us that India has for many centuries been more or less in touch with the West, as also with the Far East. After Alexander's expedition, with the wealth of writings in Greek which flowed from it, there were many travellers. Professor Lanman has something to say also of the Chinese pilgrims who, inspired by the Buddhist missionaries from India, went thither to learn the Indian tongues in order that they might study the Good Law at its source. Such was Fa-hien, of whom it was said: "Since the Great Doctrine flowed on to the East, there has been no one to be compared with Fa-hien in his forgetfulness of self and search for the Law. . . ."

Western knowledge of Sanskrit began with studious and able members of the East India Company's service in Bengal, such as H. T. Colebrooke and Sir William Jones, instrumental in founding the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. From Colebrooke, Professor Lanman quotes this amusing comment on Charles Wilkins:

"I have never yet seen any book which can be depended on for information concerning the real opinions of the Hindus except Wilkins' 'Bhagvat Geeta.' That gentleman was Sanskrit-mad and has more materials and more general knowledge respecting the Hindus than any other foreigner ever acquired since the days of Pythagoras."

And we are reminded that Wilkins, such was his zeal for Eastern learning, himself cut the punches for the first Indian type.

Coming to the heart of his subject, Professor Lanman says:

"An Occidental who would faithfully interpret India to the West must also know the life of India from actual observation and experience, and must be able to look at it from the Eastern angle of vision. . . . And, on the other hand, since the Hindus themselves are already actively engaged in interpreting the East to the West, it is needful also that they visit us, not merely to learn our way of doing things, but also to look at life as we look at it, and thus find out what things—such, let us say, as repose of spirit or the simple life—the West most needs to learn from the East."

With the fullest sympathy for everything that Professor Lanman says, a student of Theosophy would be inclined to add this: While it is altogether to be desired that the scholars of the West should work cordially with the scholars of the East, they must, if they really desire to sound the depths of Eastern scriptures,

do something more. They must do all in their power to gain the insight possessed, and generously shared, by the living Masters of the East, who are scholars and something more, and who really know what the Western scholars seek to know.

That Professor Lanman has no prejudice against the word "Theosophy," is shown by this sentence: "At least four small volumes should be devoted to specimens from the Rig Veda, the Atharva Veda, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. These last might well be entitled 'Theosophy of the Hindus: their doctrine of the all-pervading God.'"

The reviewer is tempted to supplement this by a quotation from a contribution by Professor Lanman to the Journal of the American Oriental Society for June, 1920, on "Phrase-words and Phrase-derivatives." To illustrate the way phrase-words have come into being in Sanskrit and Pali, Professor Lanman quotes this modern instance of the creation of a phrase-word admirable in its concise expressiveness: A very small boy was asked: "Is that puppy yours or your little brother's?"

Earnestly he replied: "It's both-of-us's!" C. J.

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*What is the Kingdom of Heaven?* (Scribner's, 1920), by A. Clutton Brock, English historical writer and man of letters: a stimulating and provocative criticism of Christ's teaching as to the Kingdom of Heaven, ably presented from the point of view of one who has studied the New Testament sympathetically and intelligently. The style is direct, bold, sincere to the point of being downright, and yet in nowise harsh or repellent.

Mr. Brock purposely assumes the intellectual position of a modern, pagan, and cultivated mind, hostile to narrow orthodoxy; but he has himself been irresistibly attracted, and won, by the eternal verities of Christ's revelation. His method is winning; his enthusiasm is catching; the reader is impelled to agree with his penetrating logic.

The inconsistency and "failure of belief" in the world of "orthodoxy" lead to a direct appeal to the source of Christianity, to what the writer maintains is its central teaching,—that of the Kingdom of Heaven. The significance of this teaching, if men would only accept it, live it, is clearly seen and forcibly presented. "To the orthodox," the conduct described in the Sermon on the Mount is "surprising", but it "is what God commands; to Christ it is the conduct natural to man when he knows the Kingdom of Heaven, as natural as eating and drinking are to men who see food and are hungry" (p. 33). "The fatal error of the orthodox" is that "they believe on or in the Lord Jesus Christ, but they do not believe Him; for they have not even tried to understand what He said. It was the Kingdom of Heaven that He wished men to believe in, to see, to make . . . Belief in Christ is a burden which the world is throwing off, because it has never believed Him" (p. 39).

Mr. Brock's application of the fundamental principles of the Kingdom—"The Logic of the Doctrine",—both to politics and to the individual, shows unusual penetration. "The proper function of the Church . . . is to see the Kingdom of Heaven to be a fellowship of those who are seeking the Kingdom of Heaven in the manner laid down by Christ" (p. 76). "*Vox populi* is not *vox Dei.*" "It is not the voice of the people unless it is also the voice of God," which "is the true meaning of the words" (pp. 93-100). "The problem of capital is not, finally, the problem of its ownership, but the problem of its use" (p. 104). "Men cannot live without either the real Kingdom or a false one. Man is of such a nature that he must be in some relation to the Kingdom, a relation of acceptance or refusal. . . . Insensitiveness is not, as some suppose, the result of a crude, strong, physical organization; it is a weakness, a refusal of the mind that grows with the mind's refusal. It is, as it were, a morbid thickening of the mind's outer skin, the result of which is, not that the mind is protected from harm, but that it is cut off from that relation with the Kingdom of Heaven which is health, so that it breeds within itself its own unconscious illusions" (p. 122). A. G.

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION No. 248.—*How can I tell whether I am making progress along the Path? Please give, if possible, some very simple tests. I am so often discouraged. The years are slipping by, and I have the very same faults that I had when I started.*

ANSWER.—Why be discouraged? Are you sure your faults are the same? Can you not see them more clearly than when you started? It is far better to have a "thorn in the flesh" like St. Paul, and to keep constantly at work on it, than to get the feeling of satisfaction that says, "Now I have done something; I have eradicated that fault." In that very moment another fault has come up. The only thing is to keep at the job doggedly and grimly, offering up the results as a sacrifice. Ever keep trying; make an offering of any success and even of failure, remembering that the only failure is to cease to try. I should say, do not trouble about tests. Life brings us all such numberless opportunities and tests. If we stop to think whether we have any of us succeeded here or succeeded there, we have wasted time. Let us try to become simple again. Like a little child let us bring as an offering the best we have, and leave the results to Him we serve.

A. K.

ANSWER.—Would not the surest test be: Have I more, or less, of the *will* to do, the determination to master myself, my desires, my emotions; and am I better able now to get that *will* on top quickly, in a crisis? Beyond that, why apply a measuring rod to our achievements—we are no judge of them. The fault that now seems the same as some years back, may be the same fault several stages higher up; or circumstances may now be such as to provoke it much more severely; or the failure to conquer that fault may be the best possible means toward teaching us humility, patience, or understanding of another's difficulty. As Saint Teresa says, "Leave that to the Master of the house: He is wise and powerful and knows what is best for you and for Himself."

P. T. O.

ANSWER.—Suppose you are making no progress; what then? Are you going to stop trying? Suppose you are, quite unknown to yourself, making great progress; what then? In either event, are you going to slacken your effort? Or perhaps, if you could know that your progress was disappointingly slow, you think you could do better. If you could, why not do it, at once? Is it possible for us to make too complete, too devoted an effort to follow and to serve the Masters who spare themselves in nothing, to aid us?

If tests are longed for, if there must be a measure, here is one: Are you better able, than in the beginning, to forget self, to lose self in devotion to the work, to the cause of Masters? Then there has been progress. Test it by your willingness to let go all this testing. Centre your interest in the road ahead, not in the number of yards traversed. It is a very long road. Since we know we want to travel it to the very end, why use the yardstick?

E.

QUESTION No. 249.—*What would you advise a new member-at-large to undertake, as distinctive work for the Movement? So far as I know there is nobody in*

*my environment who has any interest in Theosophy. My friends are patiently or impatiently bored when I talk about it. What can I do that will really help?*

ANSWER.—First, translate the ideas and principles which you appreciate in Theosophy into terms familiar to all in your environment. To do this, you will have to think all these things out for yourself and they will become real for you. Then you will shape your life and acts accordingly. As those in your environment insensibly appreciate this you will find that they will either lean towards the truth you represent or away from it, according to their own natures: at least they will no longer be bored. You will find you have quite enough to do for some time, and meanwhile you will find that your environment has altered. Do not talk about Theosophy, but live it. A. K.

ANSWER.—It has been said that every member of The Theosophical Society is, if he so choose, an ambassador from the Lodge of Masters to his community. To represent them properly, he evidently needs to learn all that reading and meditation will give him—about their ways of dealing with mankind; what they value; how they work; how they are best served. One point would be clear from the start—they have always encouraged men to offer them deeds rather than words. They have given an example of their scale of values by ceaselessly working for mankind while seldom breaking in upon it with advice or direction of any sort. E.

QUESTION No. 250.—*We are living to-day in the midst of such threatened and actual social upheavals that it is puzzling to know how principles should be applied. When everything slides out of place, as during a storm at sea, what is one to do? The carpenter, whom I call in to do some simple repairs, treats me as if I were shortly to be his tenant, if allowed a house at all. How am I to treat him honestly, and yet get my work done?*

ANSWER.—Do what you do in the storm at sea. Then you tie everything in place or wedge it there so that it does not shift. You cannot take the ship or yourself out of the storm. You cannot take your principles out of the social upheaval. So get firm hold of them, and the underlying verities in nature; treat and talk to your carpenter or your employee, of whatever grade, from that point of view. It is "up to you" to cause him to feel that you are able to give him direction because you are what you are, and not because of any accidental position of birth or any other enviable possessions. Principle and character are the means by which we can weather these social upheaval storms, and there is nothing else firm enough to tie to. The "social-upheavalists" are endeavouring to obtain possessions; the first things they strive for are money and position and a "good time", which they think to secure by means of self-assertion. Well, they strive after the moon that way. Your part is surely to give them of your best:—yourself, and what you have made of yourself through the principles by which you have chosen to shape your life. Your carpenter will yield to the force of your character, and respect you for it. So will you be your "brother's keeper" and give of your best in your own environment. A. K.

QUESTION No. 251.—*Is there any way to hold oneself up to the level of consciousness attained in prayer and meditation, and to avoid dropping back to one's ordinary level?*

ANSWER.—Surely, there must be: but as surely that way involves constant practice, until "practice makes perfect". To avoid dropping back means the attainment of "continuous meditation," or the stage of contemplation perfected. But this involves little short of perfection from our ordinary human point of view. We, who are in the midst of ordinary life, have the opportunity of endeavouring to practise holding ourselves up to the level with all sorts of distractions around us

to divert our attention. We can follow Krishna's injunction, "Think of Me and fight"; can offer up all our acts and thoughts on the altar of the heart, making of each an offering consciously made to the Master. Our ordinary life thus constitutes a splendid opportunity of practising "recollection", not merely as a definite performance at a specified hour, but in each act and thought of the day. A life so lived becomes a sum total of consecration, and it is by such means that we shall avoid dropping back. A. K.

QUESTION No. 252.—*How do you explain Joan of Arc's "Voices"? Were they psychic delusions of some sort, or real guidance?*

ANSWER.—I explain them in the way she explained them. I think she is the best judge. She spoke of them as the voices of her brothers in Paradise. I think that is what they were. She had given her whole life to a purpose. She was used as the instrument of divine forces for the working of a miracle. That miracle stands forth in history undisputed. There was nothing in a girl, a peasant girl, to work that miracle, unless there was a divine power back of her. Quite simply, she said her brothers in Paradise told her what to do. She did not want to do it. She pleaded to be left alone. Finally, she went; giving her life in obedience. That is one of the tests. M.

ANSWER.—At all times, in all ages, there have been those who have talked with their brothers in Paradise. They did not have to die in order to do it. They were perfectly wide-awake. They knew what they were doing. Remember again, the pure in heart shall see God. The pure in heart, with all that that implies: clearly that must mean singleness of soul; singleness of purpose; absolute un-self-consciousness; the desire to do what the Masters wish, what the Law wishes, what God wishes,—to do it without reference to self. They were willing to pay any price. The pure in heart have always seen Him, and always will. H.

QUESTION No. 253.—*At a recent Theosophical Society Branch meeting we were advised, in thinking of the great war, not to confine ourselves to its incidents or outer causes, but to seek the purpose back of it. The speaker said that modern science entirely neglected, and even sought to banish purpose from the universe, but that real students of Theosophy sought the purpose in all things. Does this mean that there is a purpose in every trivial happening of daily life and that we ought to seek to find it?*

ANSWER.—We are all of us familiar with people who are perpetually bubbling over with talk simply for the love of talking. What they say is a matter of no importance to themselves or any one else; they go through life incessantly creating noise for the sake of hearing the sound of their own voices and giving expression to the vapidity that arises within them. Are we to imagine that God—or the Lodge or the Power back of evolution, or whatever term you choose to use for the great creative Power of the universe—is equally vapid, and creates worlds and events the way children break dolls' heads, just to hear the noise they make?

"The universe exists for the purposes of the soul." It was created by the Soul for the soul, and nothing arises or can ever arise that should not be used for the growth of the soul. This applies as well to the events that we, in our ignorance of true proportion, are pleased to call trivial, as to those that we call great. One way to learn to see the purpose of daily events, is to set ourselves to find how each one may be used to develop character, to help in the acquisition of some power that our souls need,—patience, sympathy for others in place of irritation, humility instead of vanity, endurance and courage instead of fear and self-pity, or whatever the lesson may be. Always beneath the outer covering lies Life's gift to us, if we will but take it. M.

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# The Theosophical Society

## Founded by H. P. Blavatsky at New York in 1875

THE Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they desire for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society, held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane, and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics*.

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *path* to tread in this."

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Secretary T. S., P. O. Box 64, Station O, New York.

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